Heaven upon Earth:

OR, THE

BEST FRIEND

IN THE

WORST of TIMES.

Delivered in several Sermons,

By JAMES JANEWAY

Minister of the GOSPEL.

The Fourth Edition *much Corrected and Enlarged.*

JOHN 15. *ver.* 15.

Henceforth I call you no more Servants,——but Friends.

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IN THE

THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

WHen I consider what a noble thing the Soul of Man is, the High end for which he was Made, and the great Account he is shortly to make to Him that made him, I cannot but wonder, That he who was made little lower than the Angels, should make himself little better than the Beasts.

The great and dreadful God hath taken much pains to reduce the Inhabitants of London, *and indeed all the Nation to the Obedience of his Son. He hath been pleading with poor* England *of late in such a manner, as is scarce to be parallel'd in*

fore-going Ages; he hath left the print of his Fingers behind him, and written divine diſpleaſure in Black Letters.

The Righteous Judge began his Circuit in London, *and in that one City, above one Hundred Thouſand received the Sentence of Death from his Juſt Tribunal.*

That was not quite Remov'd before another Amazing Judgment was ſent to ſucceed it. The Voyce of the Lord was not heard, the Language of the Plague was not underſtood; wherefore the dreadful Jehovah *ſpake Louder, and Louder, as he did once from Mount Sinai, in Fire, Flame, and Smoak, he rode upon the Wings of the Wind, he rode in a Chariot of Flaming Fire, whilſt the Bells did Ring their own Knells, as they were tumbling; and it's to be feared, were more melted at the Anger of the Mighty God, than Thouſands of Hard-hearted Men and Women were. The Leads of the Churches were Diſſolved into ſhowers more eaſily far than ſtupid profeſſors, that were wont to ſit under them. That was a Black Cloud indeed which no Wind could blow over, till it fell in ſuch Scalding Drops.*

Theſe

Theſe Conſidered, I hope it will not be unwelcome, nor unſeaſonable, if I put you upon looking out for ſuch a Friend as will provide ſufficiently for his under all theſe Straits, *and prove the* Beſt in the Worſt of Times. He *knows* Job *upon the Dunghil, as well as* David *upon the Throne; he will be moſt Kind when others are moſt Unkind; he will Viſit you, when others will ſcarce Look upon you. In his houſe you ſhall be as welcom as ever. There are many Manſions, if it were not ſo, he would have told you. In this City there is Room enough, and you ſhall have Entertainment, &c. be more welcome than if you had ſtayed away: His Doors will be open to them who have no Houſes to hide their Heads in. Come to him ye Harbourleſs ones, he Invites you Earneſtly and Heartily,* &c. *He will give you Shelter, you that have no Friends, or but ſorry ones. Come to him now in your Straits, and he will never caſt your poverty, or his Kindneſs in your Teeth, except your Carriage be Proud, and anbecoming your State. God hath lately read us a Lecture of the Vanity of all Creature-Enjoyments, And will you after this*

refuse Acquaintance with Him, who will be better to you than a thousand of the best friends that ever man had upon Earth?

I have in the following Book given you Directions how you may come to be Acquainted with Him.

As God appointed Cities of Refuge, so he gave express Command, that the way to them should be made Plain, Fit, and Broad: And therefore the Messengers work every Year was to Remove all Stumbling-Blocks, and Offences. They suffered not any Hill or Dale to be in the way; and at the partition of wayes, they set up in writing, Refuge, Refuge, *That the* Pursued *might have notice what way take to upon every turn,* Deut. 19. 2, 3.

The like I have endeavoured in this ensuing Discourse, to make the Way to this Blessed Friend Plain and Familiar. Pray for a Blessing upon it, which cost the Author some Pains, Prayers, Tears, and Groans; That what was here written might be the Transcript of his own Experience, and might be some way subservient to the Glory of God in the Conversion and Comfort of Souls. If you find any good in the use of this Book,

give

give God the Praiſe, and labour to keep a conſtant warm ſence of the Excellency of ſuch a Friend upon your Spirits, and commend this Friend to all your Relations and Acquaintance; that none of them after great Loſſes, may loſe God, Heaven, and themſelves too. O that will be a Dreadful Loſs indeed! I again beſeech you; forget not to Pray for one of the moſt unworthy inſtruments that ever Infinite Goodneſs made uſe of in ſo glorious a Work:

James Janeway.

July 20.
1669.

HEAVEN UPON EARTH.

Job 22. 21.

Acquaint now thy self with him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee.

THey who have improved their experience of things by Wisdom, and gathered up the value of mans life, by comparing his desire with his Enjoyments, his Troubles and Sorrows with his Content and Joy, have concluded the worth of the life of man to be below nothing; they have drawn a black line upon the whole, and shut up all in darkness. Thus *Jacob* of old in the account which he gives of his life to *Pharaoh*, Gen. 47. 9. & *Job* 5. 7. and also *Solomon*, who had an extraordinary measure of wisdom

dom by Divine diſpenſation, who had a large ſpirit like the Sand of the Sea-ſhore, he gave himſelf great liberty in trying what that *good under the Sun* for the ſons of men was, *Eccleſ.* 2. 1. When he had taken a taſte of all the worlds Contents, yet he finds a bitterneſs mixed in all delights, which abideth no longer then the pleaſure *verſ.* 11, & 17. And whoſoever ſhall enter into himſelf, and feel the workings of his own mind, ſhall be able to read over the Tranſcript of the ſame in his own Conſcience. Who is he among the ſons of men, that in his Natural life hath attained to a ſtate wherein he was able to ſay, *Here I well ſtay, it is now well with me, I deſire no addition to my preſent condition?* If there be any ſuch, I dare undertake to prove him unacquainted with himſelf. Where now ſhall I faſten the blame of this univerſal evil? Shall we fall out with our life, as a thing not worth the having? Shall we ſhrink unto our former nothing, and caſt up our being and life into the hands of God, as that out of which we gathered nothing but bitterneſs and diſquiet? Far be this from us, this were to juſtifie that evil and wicked ſervant, who ſaid of God, *That he knew he was a hard Maſter, reaping where he had not ſown, and gathering where he had not ſtrawed.* This would be to accuſe God of having made us to an unaviodable neceſſity of miſery. How then comes it to paſs, that we are all held faſt in this common calamity? It is from thy ſelf, O man, it is from thy ſelf, this evil is becauſe of our falling from God. It is a Righteous thing with God, that when man departed from him, he ſhould reap the Fruit of his own doings; and indeed it is impoſſible for a creature of our compo-

ſure

ſure and conſtitution, but to feel it ſelf diſſatisfied with all wordly material employments, and to find trouble and diſquiet in it ſelf, while it is deprived of its true good. If we would have a true account of our diſquiet and diſſatisfaction, this it is. God made man of all the works of his hands, to be the neareſt to himſelf, and hath fitted his principles for a higher life, then that which hath the things of this world for its object; but man hath made himſelf like the Beaſts that periſh. We have given our ſouls into captivity to our bodies, or rather, we are fallen from our Union with God, and are gathered up into our ſelves, and become deprived of a ſufficiency in ſeparation from God; then it muſt needs be, that we being gone down into a lower ſtate than that which we were made to, ſhould find nothing but diſſatisfaction and emptineſs; here we are by nature, and hitherto we have brought our ſelves by forſaking God.

Now the great inquiry will be, what Remedy here is for this our woful condition; is there any way whereby we may be delivered from this miſery? If there be, what way is it? Theſe words which I have choſen to ſpeak to, do contain the Anſwer to this Inquiry.

Acquaint now thy ſelf with him, and be at peace, thereby good ſhall come unto thee. This is the counſel of one of *Job's* three friends to him in the time of his great affliction. You have heard of the affliction of *Job*, and how his three friends came to relieve him with their Counſel; but the Devil who had a Commiſſion from God to try his utmoſt with *Job*, yet ſparing his life made uſe of his friends, who are to be a comfort in the hour

of adverſity, to be a great means of his diſquiet; ſo that he cries out of them, *Miſerable comforters are ye all*, Chap. 16. 2. And the great way of their troubling him was, by miſapplying, by making falſe application of true principles. In their Diſcourſes there are many excellent Truths; yet by their hard conſtruing, & ungrounded condemning of him, they by God are reproved, as not having ſpoken the thing that was right, *Chap.* 42. 7. yet in many things their counſel was ſuitable, and ſeaſonable, of which ſort, the words in the Text may be accounted. In this Chapter *Eliphaz* had been inquiring into the cauſe of *Job's* great affliction; and holding this for an undeniable Principle, that the righteous God, being the great diſpoſer of affliction, did bring this evil upon him becauſe of his ſin; he meaſured the greatneſs of his ſins, by the greatneſs of his afflictions; he made account, becauſe Gods hand was gone forth in an extraordinary manner againſt *Job*, therefore there was ſome extraordinary guilt upon him, *verſ.* 5. & 13. *And thou ſayeſt, How doth God judge through the dark clouds?* Thus we have his apprehenſion of *Job*, as one under great affliction, becauſe of his great ſins; and the Text is *Eliphaz* his counſel to *Job*, under this character and ſo is ſuitable advice to thoſe that are under ſickneſs, or great afflictions, and that are under the guilt of great ſin.

Acquaint thy ſelf with him, and be at peace thereby good ſhall come unto thee. The words are a Doctrine for the ſoul under a ſenſe of its loſt condition, with a Promiſe very comfortable upon the embracing thereof.

The Doctrine is, *Acquaint thy ſelf with him, and be at peace.*

The

The Promise: *Thereby good shall come unto thee.*

These words, *Be at peace*, may be referred either to the former, as an addition to the Doctrine, *Be at peace*; that is, keep your selves in a quiet submission to the hand of God; or to the latter, and so *be at peace*, is as much as, *peace shall be to thee.*

In the Doctrine we are to consider the *Act*, and *Object.*

The Act, *Aquaint.*

The Object is *God.*

DOCTRINE.

So that the *Doctrine* is, *To enter into acquaintance with God.* This Proposition stands forth to the view of every eye, that it is the Duty of man to be *acquainted with God.*

Now the first thing that is before us to enquire after, is, What this *acquaintance with God is.*

Secondly, to evidence and clear it to be the Duty of man to *acquaint himself with God.* Acquaintance with God implyes several things.

1. It signifies a full and determinate knowledge of this Truth, that there is a *God*, and so to know him, as to his Nature, distinct from all other *beings.*

There is a three fold knowledge of God.

1. *A Rational.*
2. *A Natural.*
3. *A Supernatural.*

First, there is a *Rational knowledge of God*, which is a clear discovery of an Almighty, All-sufficient Cause of all things, which is attained by a Reasonable discussing Power of the soul, which argueth from things that are visible and sensible

to an invisible and self-principled Cause of all things. Man found himself brought into the world furnished with an innumerable variety of Creatures, and none of these having power to make it self; we see likewise such an accurate order in every particular Creature; and in all the Creatures one with another, that we cannot but see clearly that there is a Supream Almighty Cause of all things, who hath by his power, brought forth all things into being: who is likewise the most wise Agent, who by his unsearchable wisdom, hath curiously framed every Creature, and by his wonderful counsel hath set them in such an order, that they all serve one another, till at length they all meet in man, as in the common center.

Secondly, there is a *Natural knowledg* of God, which is the inward touch, and mental sensation of a Supream Righteous Judge, to whose trial we feel our selves under an unavoidable bond, in doing *good* and *evil*. This is that which is commonly called *Conscience*: this a man finds in himself if at any time he have committed any secret sin whatsoever, which none in the world knows but himself: he feels it to be a pressure upon his spirit, as being under the examination of a power superior to himself. Now this is nothing else but a secret impression that God hath made of himself upon the minds of Men, by which man is bound to stand before the Tribunal of God. These two ways of knowing of God were very clear to man in his perfect state, but since the fall of man they are much weakened, and decayed. But.

Thirdly, There is a *supernatural* way whereby

by we come to know God which hath repaired our loſs by *Adams* ſin, and that is by Gods extraordinary Revelation of himſelf in his holy Scriptures: by theſe we may come to have a more clear diſtinct knowledge of God, both that he is, and what he is. To theſe three ways of letting in the knowledge of God into the ſoul, three mental Acts of the ſoul do anſwer.

Firſt, A Rational Diſcourſe, by which we find out God by the Creatures.

Secondly, An inward ſenſation, which feels God as juſt in good and evil.

The Third mental Act is Faith, which for its Foundation hath the Word of God.

There is a Fourth way of knowing God which is by experiment; which is when God manifeſts himſelf to his peculiar ones, and lets out the knowledge of himſelf to their Souls; as when the Sun breaks forth with a bright ſhining in a cloudy day: but this belongeth rather to another head.

Thus you ſee the firſt thing imployed in this *acquaintance with God*, which is the loweſt.

Yet how many are there that have little *acquaintance with God* in theſe ſigns? May we not come to many who profeſs they know God, and yet among all their thoughts, they have had few or none to ſatisfie themſelves concerning him? How groſs are the apprehenſions of ſome concerning God? Some men reſiſt and ſtifle that *Natural knowledge* that they have of God, ſuch as thoſe, *Rom.* 1. 20. they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and God gave them over to a Reprobate mind, or a mind void of judgment, as the word ſignifies. Others have lived all their

days upon the bounty and goodneſs of God, and yet have not been led by the ſtreams to the Fountain, from which all hath flow'd. Others can buſie themſelves all their time in other things, and little inquire into the word of God, by which they may be led to the knowledge of him; *But woe to thoſe on whom the fury of the Lord ſhall be poured out, becauſe they know not God*, Jer. 10. 23.

Secondly, *Acquaintance with God*, implyes frequent acceſs unto God. We do not uſually reckon our ſelves acquainted with any perſon, by a bare knowledge that ſuch a perſon there is, and that we are able to give ſome General Deſcription of him; but when we ſay we are acquainted with any, it is underſtood that we have been in ſuch a ones company, we have come to him, and been with him: ſuch is our acquaintance to be with God.

Under this Head I ſhall ſpeak, Firſt, *Of that ſeparation that is of the ſoul from God.*

Secondly, *Of the return of the ſoul to God.*

Thirdly, *Of the abiding of the ſoul with God.*

Firſt, Of the *ſeparation and diſtance of the ſoul from God.* That corrupted eſtate in which every man comes into the world, is a ſtate of ſeparation from God. This diſtance is not to be underſtood as a Phyſical Natural Diſtance, for ſo God is near to every one of us by his Omnipreſence, & by his infinite Power, ſuſtaining us in our being and actions. *Acts.* 17. 27, 28. *Though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, move, and have our being.* But this is to be underſtood,

Firſt, *Of a moral ſeparation from God.* There is a great ſtrangeneſs between our ſouls and God; we reckon our ſelves to have little to do with him,

him, and to be very remotely concern'd in him; we reckon that God takes very little regard of us, we look upon God as far from us, & we think God looks upon us as at a great diſtance; we love not God, and think that God loves not us.

Secondly, this *ſeparation* may be underſtood of a *Judicial Diſtance*, at which God hath ſet ſinful man from himſelf. Man is kept out from God, as being unfit to approach to him in his ſinfulneſs and impurities, and that is either in this life, in which condition every one is, *till he be made nigh by Chriſt, and ſet before the Father without ſin in him; till they are born again of the Spirit, & juſtified, and ſanctified by Chriſt*, Epheſ. 2. 13. *Ye that ſometimes were afar off, were made near by the blood of Chriſt.* Here this Judicial ſeparation is the execution of that terrible ſentence, *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, Mat. 25. 41. Thus ye ſee the Diſtance at which man is from God, which is not Phyſical, but either Moral or Judicial.

Secondly, When we are thus ſeparated from God, if we will be *acquainted* with him, there is required a returning to God. *Acquaintance* doth neceſſarily imply an Union: Now where there was a former *ſeparation* and *diſtance*, there is required a motion to compliance, and a return either in both parties, or in one at leaſt; ſo that before ever we can be *acquainted with God*, there muſt be a forſaking our former diſtance, the ſeparation muſt be removed. Now God hath done what could be conceived, and beyond what could be expected towards the reducing of us, to an union with himſelf; whereas he might juſtly have thruſt us away from him for ever, and never

have

have given us liberty to come near him more, as being so filthy by sin, that his Holiness cannot endure us: yet he hath freely set open a door of hope for our return: he did not come thus nigh to Angels when they fell, but they were turned away from him, and are bound in chains of darkness to the Judgment of the great day: it is impossible for them to return any more. And so it would have been for us, had not God made it possible by an Act of Free Love; and he hath likewise revealed his willingness to receive us if we return, yea, his earnest desire, *Turn ye, why will ye die?* Yea, his rejoycing in our return, as a Father rejoyceth to receive a prodigal Son that hath departed from him. But that God should go further, to close with us while we retain our impurities, and remain at a distance from him, it is impossible, because of the unchangeableness and simplicity of his Nature, and because of the purity and exactness of his Holiness; it must therefore necessarily follow, that a yielding and return must be on our parts, or else there is no possibility of compliance between God and us, after that we have forsaken him by sin. And this is most righteous and equal; for man did forsake God, God did not forsake man; man made the difference; man ran away from God: God follows man as far as his Holiness and Unchangable nature will permit him; he calls to us to return, he is ready to meet and imbrace us in the arms of his Love, and to receive us into acquaintance with himself, as the Father in the Parable met his prodigal Son, Luke. 15. 20. *He saw him afar off, & had compassion on him, ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him.* Herein have we

shadowed

ſhadowed out to us the great readineſs of God to receive returning ſinful man; but as the Prodigal Son muſt return to his Father, ſo man muſt return to God. Now it is ſin that ſeparates between us and God, and keeps good things from us, *Iſa.* 59. 2. *Your iniquity hath ſeparated between you and your God, and your ſins have hid his face from you*: Therefore while we cleave to our ſins, we are ſeparated from God: till we are ſeparated from our ſins, we cannot be united to God. Thus ye ſee our ſeparation from God, and our neceſſity of returning to God, before there can be any acquaintance with him.

Thirdly, *To our acquaintance with God*, is required an abiding with God. We reckon not our ſelves acquainted with any perſon upon the firſt meeting, or when there hath paſſed but a word or two between us; but it is ſuppoſed to acquaintance, that we have made a conſiderable ſtay with him; and have had frequent acceſs to him. Thus it is between God and us: we muſt not only come to him, but abide with him, or elſe we ſhall never be acquainted with him, *Joh.* 8. 23. *If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Diſciples.* So I ſay, if you return to God, and continue with God, then ſhall ye be acquainted with him indeed. *Acquaintance*, ſignifies not a bare Act, but a State or Habit. Now this is the difference between an Act and a State; that an Act is paſſing and is gone; but a State ſignifies an abiding and continuance. There may be a drawing nigh to God, without abiding and continuing with God, upon ſome deep Conviction, or ſtrange providence, or eminent danger; as it is ſaid, *In their affliction, they will ſeek me early.*

Yet

Yet they may ſoon forget and forſake God. This is but a ſeeming and practical approaching to God, a drawing nigh in appearance, when the heart is far from God: but that approaching to God which makes acquaintance with God, is a biding with him. Thoſe that are acquainted with a ſpiritual life know theſe things what they are, and that they are the greateſt realities in the world; they know that ſometimes there is a greater nearneſs of their ſouls to God, they are ſenſible of the approaches of their heart to God; and of the withdrawing of their ſouls from God; they know what it is for the ſoul to feel the approaches of God, and his ſmiles fill their ſouls with unſpeakable Comfort: And to feel God withdrawing from the ſoul, this clouds their joy, and makes them go mourning: They can tell you at ſuch a time they were brought unto his Banquetting-houſe, and his Banner over them was Love: They can tell you at ſuch time Chriſt came into his Garden to eat his pleaſant Fruits; at ſuch a time they heard the voice of their Beloved, ſaying, *Open to me, my Siſter, my Spouſe, my Love, my Dove, my Undefiled.* And when the ſoul hath neglected this knock of Chriſt to open to him, that then he hath withdrawn: *I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himſelf, and was gone.* Theſe things are the experiences of a precious child of God, which I fear are little felt, and little known amongſt us: but where theſe things are not, there is no *acquaintance with God.* For,

Firſt, *They do know him.*

Secondly, *They draw nigh to him, they have near acceſs to him.*

Thirdly

Thirdly, *They have intimate Converſe with him.* This is another thing required to acquaintance. We are not ſaid to be acquainted with any perſon, unleſs we have had intimate converſe with him. We may be next Neighbours, and yet have no Acquaintance, unleſs our converſation hath been mutual. So it is between God and us; there may be a nighneſs between the ſoul and God, and yet no Acquaintance between the ſoul and God. We are nigh to God, in our dependance upon him, we are near to God by his immediate providence and ſuſtentation of us, and by his Omnipotence. There is a nearneſs to God by way of Dedication. As God ſet apart the Children of *Iſrael* to be a people near unto himſelf, ſo the viſible Church of God is nearer to him then thoſe that are not of the Church. There is a nearneſs of Dedication among us by Bapiſm. But all this may be without Acquaintance. There is therefore required to our Acquaintance with God, an intimate converſe with God. We have great converſe with thoſe who are of the Family, or ſociety with us, Now ſuch is our acquaintance with God, as thoſe who are of his Family. God is called the Father of the Families of all the earth: and the viſible Church is reckoned as Gods Family; but in a great Family there may be little Acquaintance with thoſe perſons which be of remote employments: but to acquaintance with God there muſt be ſuch a relation as implies familiar converſe. This intimacy that the people of God have to him, is expreſſed by the neareſt relations in Scripture. As *Abraham* is called *The Friend of God*, 2 Chron. 20. 7. *Jehoſhaphat* prayes unto God, and ſaith,

ſaith, *Art not thou our God, who didſt drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Iſrael, and gave it to the ſeed of* Abraham *thy friend for ever? And the Lord ſpake unto Moſes face to face, as a man ſpeaketh to his Friend,* Exod. 33. 11. John 15. 15. *Hence forth I call you not ſervants, but friends, for the ſervant knows not what his Lord doth; but I have called you Friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* Now by *Friend* is commonly underſtood a ſtate of converſe and ſociety one with another. And this intimacy is expreſſed likewiſe by the relation of Husband and Wife, *Iſa.* 54. 5. *For thy Maker is thy Husband,* Hoſ. 2. 7. *Then ſhall ſhe ſay, I will go and return to my Husband, for then was it better with me than now.* By *husband* there is meant *God.* And the whole Book of the *Canticles* is a relation of the mutual converſe betwixt God & his people, betwixt Chriſt and his Church, under the relation of a *Bridegroom* and his *Spouſe.* Now what converſe more intimate then between Husband and Wife? Such is that between a ſoul acquainted with God, and God. Again, this is ſhadowed out to us under the relation of a Father and his Children, 1 John 3. 1. *Behold, what manner of Love the father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called his ſons!* And the holy Spirit is given to be the Spirit of Adoption in the hearts of Gods people, *Rom.* 8. 15, 16. *Ye have received the ſpirit of Adoption, whereby ye cry, Abba, Father. The ſpirit it ſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God.* What is ſignifi'd by this *Relation,* but a nigh union and intimate converſe between the ſoul and God? And this is ne eſſary to our acquaintance with God, even intimate converſe

with

with God. By this I mean a nearneſs of employment, when the Objects of our employments are the ſame, then are we ſaid to converſe with God, when we are employed about thoſe things wherein God is moſt. When there is, as it were, a mutual commerce and trading between the ſoul and God; man giving himſelf up to God, and God giving himſelf out to man; man taking up the intereſt of God, and God undertaking for the intereſt of man; theſe & ſuch like actings are the converſe which the ſoul hath with God. I ſpeak of things which the men of the world are not acquainted with; but thoſe that are acquainted with God, know theſe things, and upon the mention of them, their hearts leap within them. As face anſwereth to face in a glaſs, ſo experience anſwereth theſe things. When this ſtring is ſtruck, their hearts do harmonize; as when a Lute-ſtring is ſtruck, the other ſtrings of nigheſt concord with it move alſo. But theſe things are a myſtery to the world, and they ſay as thoſe of Chriſts word, *We know not what he ſaith.* And it is no wonder, for they are the actings of a Divine life, to which all are naturally dead, till they are raiſed to newneſs of life by the quickning of the ſpirit of God. But I proceed to ſhew what is meant by this acquaintance with God.

Fourthly, To this Acquaintance with God, there is required a mutual Communication. Where there is acquaintance between man and man, there hath been a mutual Interchange of conference and diſcourſe. Thus when the ſoul is acquainted with God, there is an Interchange of converſe between God and the ſoul. The ſoul openeth its wants, breaths out its complaints,

plants, ſpreadeth its neceſſities before God; God openeth the treaſures of his love in his Son, the rich Mynes of his precious Promiſes, and the ſecrets of his good Will to the ſoul. Thus *Pſal.* 25. 15. *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his Covenant.* Gen. 18. 17. *The Lord ſaith, ſhall I hide from Abraham that thing that I do?* Thoſe that are friends and acquaintance, they will let out their thoughts and purpoſes one to another, & they gave out themſelves mutually into communion one with another. Thus Chriſt knocks at the door of the ſoul, *Rev.* 3. 20. *Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and ſup with him, and he with me.* Here is Chriſt offering himſelf to the ſoul, & the ſoul is to entertain him; at another time the ſoul goes to God, and God entertains it; God hath promiſed that he will open, *Mat.* 7. 28. *Knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you*; and to him that knocks it ſhall be opened. There are frequent actions among thoſe that are acquainted: And by theſe are expreſſed to us the acquaintance of the ſoul with God.

Now the Communications that are between the ſoul and God, are exceeding tranſcending all communications that are between mens acquaintance. Men may communicate their thoughts, their eſtates, their aſſiſtance to one another; but they cannot communicate their life, nor their nature, nor their likeneſs; but ſuch communications there are between God and the ſoul that is acquainted with him. All *being* is a communication from God the firſt *being*: nay, the ſeveral degrees of *being*, have ſeveral communicati-

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ons from God, ſome greater and ſome leſſer, ſpiritual *beings* have a higher communication then natural; but Gods higheſt communications have been to man in that myſtical Union of the Divine Nature to the Humane Nature in Chriſt, and next in the myſtical Union of the Sons of God to Chriſt, and in him to the Father. Thus Chriſt is ſaid to live in us, *Coloſ.* 2 20. *I live*, ſaith *Paul*; *yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me.* Thus Chriſt prays the Father for his Children, that they may be one, *as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they be one in us*, Joh. 4. 17, 21. & Joh. 1. 15, 16. *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. *We are ſaid to be partakers of the Divine Nature.* This expreſſion implyes high communication of God to man. Again there are high acts of communication from man to God (for though God receives not from man, yet man is to act as giving out himſelf to God; ſuch as to give up the will to Gods will. As that of *Eli*, *It is the Lord let him do what ſeemeth him good.* And that of *David*, 2 Sam. 15. 16. *If he thus ſay, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I; let him do with me as ſeemeth good unto him.*

Another act of high Communication of a mans ſelf to God, is parting with preſent enjoyments for future hopes, in confidence of Gods promiſe. Thus the Spirit of God works in the children of God a readineſs to forſake Father or Mother, and Brethren, and Siſter, and life it ſelf for the cauſe of God. Thus *John Baptiſt* was willing to become *Nothing*, that Chriſt might become *All*; to be caſt *down*, that Chriſt might be lifted *up*; Joh. 3. 13. *He muſt encreaſe, but I muſt decreaſe.*

Thus *Abraham* gives his *Isaack* to dye when God calls for him. Thus *Moses* esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of *Egypt*, Heb. 11. 26. *Paul* counted not his life dear for Christ, *Acts* 20. 24. These have been the actings of the souls of those that have been acquainted with God, and such workings as these are the feeling of a child of God.

I have shewed you four things which are requisite to acquaintance with *God*.

First, Knowledg of *God*.

Secondly, acces to him.

Thirdly, Converse with him.

Fourthly, Communication to him, and from him.

Fifthly, There is likewise required to acquaintance, a loving compliance. Amongst men Acquaintance implyes Affection. And so it is between *God* and man. Never any soul was acquainted with *God*, that did not love *God*; and such a soul is an enemy to *God*; therefore very few are acquainted with *God*; but all that are not acquainted with *God*, are enemies to *God*. If we should come to a person that is not acquainted with *God*, and say, Thou art an enemy to *God*; this would seem a heavy imputation: but I speak it freely, thou, whosoever thou art, that art not acquainted with *God*, thou art an enemy to *God*; for thou art still as thou we'rt born: but we are all enemies to *God* according to our corrupt nature, and abide enemies till we come to be acquainted with *God*. Love to *God*, and acquaintance with *God* go together, are heightned by one another. First, *God* lets into the soul by his Spirit a partial discovery of himself, and by

by this with the working of his Spirit, he incline the heart in love to him. Then on the first working of the soul towards God, he lets in a clear light, whereby he draweth the soul to a further degree of love. A clear place for this, *Ephes.* 3. 7, 18 *And that being rooted and grounded in love, ye may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the length, and breadth, and depth and heighth, and to know the love of God which passeth all understanding: that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.* The love of God fits the soul to comprehend the glorious discoveries of God; and the discoveries of God, doth heighten our love to God. Acquaintance with God, makes us like unto God, as in *Joh.* 3. 2. *We shall see him as he is.* And our likeness to God, as it makes us the delight of God, so it makes us delight in God; for the cause of Complacency and Love is a likeness between the Lover and Beloved. God doth not love us with a love of complacency, till we are like him; nor do we love God, till we are made like God. Now our beholding God, and being acquainted with him, is a great way to our being made like to God, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *We all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Thus you see that love is likewise required to our acquaintance with God, without it no acquaintance.

I have in the first part, spoken of the Nature of acquaintance with God in five particulars. There must be,

First, A Knowledg of God.

Secondly, Nighness to God.

Thirdly, Familiar converse with God.

Fourthly, Mutual communication between us and God.

Fifthly, An affectionate love towards God.

The next thing ſhould be to ſhew that man is to be acquainted with God; but we will firſt take a review of theſe things. We have taken theſe things into our underſtandings; now let us ſet our hearts to theſe things, for in theſe things is the life of Religion. If there be acquaintance with God, then groſs wickedneſs drops off, as ſcales from an ulcerated body, when the conſtitution of the body is mended. In acquaintance with God will be your only true comfort in this life; and the perfection of it, is the very happineſs of Heaven. Let us then behold, till our hearts earneſtly deſire, till our ſouls be drawn out after acquaintance with God. If God be to be known, to be approached unto, to be converſed with by me, will he communicate himſelf to me? and I my ſelf to him. Oh that he would love me, that I might love him! Oh bleſſed are they that know him, as they are known of him! It is good for me to draw nigh to him. *A day in his Court is better than a thouſand elſwhere. My ſoul longeth, ye fainteth for the Courts of the Lord. My heart and my fleſh cryeth out for the living God.* Oh that I were received into converſe with God! that I might hear his voyce, and ſee his countenance, for his voyce is ſweet, and his countenance comly! Oh that I might communicate my ſelf to God, and that he would give himſelf to me! Oh that I might love him! that I were ſick of Love! that I might die in love! that I might loſe my ſelf in his Love, as a ſmall drop in the unfathomleſs depth of his Love! that I might dwell in

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the eternal love of him? This is *acquaintance with God.*

Acquaint now therefore thy ſelf with God, and be at peace, ſo ſhall good come unto thee. We now proceed to the next thing, which is to evidence it to be the duty of man, to acquaint himſelf with God. This then is that into which the whole Scripture runs, as into a common Channel. The Scriptures are a diſcovery of Gods proceedings with man under a double Covenant, and this is the great deſign of God in both Covenants. The firſt Covenant was, *That while man did remain in obedience to God, God would give man free and intimate acquaintance with himſelf.* But if man became diſobedient, then he ſhould be diſpoſſeſſed of an intereſt in God, and of Communion with him; which was that death threatned upon the *eating the forbidden Fruit.* The death of the body is its being ſeparated from the Soul, but the death of the Soul, is in ſeparation from God. Now immediately upon *Adams* tranſgreſſion, man becomes unacquainted with God; ſo that upon the hearing of the voice of the Lord, *they hid themſelves from the preſence of the Lord, among the trees of the garden.* What a woful caſe is man naturally in? He hath loſt his acquaintance with God, and was in a way, never, never to recover it: upon Gods approach he flees. And ſuch is the nature of all ſin, it puts a man into a diſpoſition to greater ſins: Every departure from God inclines towards a greater. In the firſt Covenant this is the whole of it; it is both a command to keep nigh to God, and a promiſe of *Gods* being nigh to them, and a threatning of Gods putting them away far from him, man breaking the firſt

Covenant. The immediate effect of it was the ſin of fleeing from God, quite contrary to that acquaintance. Inſtead of their former apprehenſions of God, they ſeem to have forgotten his omnipreſence: inſtead of peace with God, they have nothing but dread and torment in the thoughts of God; inſtead of drawing nigh to God, they run away from him; inſtead of converſe with God, they chooſe never to have to do with him more; inſtead of giving themſelves up to God, they if it had been poſſible, would have hid themſelves from God. Acquaintance with God is the ſum of the firſt Covenant; unacquaintance with God is the miſery of the breach of the Covenant. This is likewiſe the great deſign and purpoſe of God in the ſecond Covenant. The ſecond Covenant is this: When God beheld man in a miſerable condition, by reaſon of the breach of the Firſt Covenant, in the unſearchable riches of his goodneſs, according to the eternal purpoſe of his good Will towards Man, he made an agreement with his Son to ſend him amongſt a generation of ſinful Men, that if he would undertake to bring them back into acquaintance with the Father; he was willing and ready to receive them again into acquaintance with him; the Son being the expreſs Image of his Fathers will, and perſon, hath the ſame good will to man with the Father, and is ready to cloſe with his Fathers propoſals; and ſo enters into a Covenant with the Father to ſatisfie Divine Juſtice, and to take away Sin, and to take away the middle wall of Separation, to recover a choſen generation, and to bring them back again to God. Thus he became the head of another Covenant

ant between God and man. And as the first Covenant was made with *Adam* for him and his seed; So the second Covenant is made with Jesus Christ, for him and his seed. Because that the first Covenant was broken in *Adam*, therefore the second Covenant was put into surer hands; into the hands of the Son, *the second Adam*, the Lord from heaven. Now I say, that the great design and purpose of this second Covenant is in reference to mans acquaintance with God, is clear. This is held forth to us in that parable of the lost sheep, Luke 15. 45. *When the shepheard had lost one sheep, he leaves the flock, and seeks for that which was lost.* So when man was lost by sin, Jesus Christ leaves all, to recover and fetch home that which was lost, *Were all gon astray like lost sheep, as* David *saith of himself*, Psal. 119 *Christ is come to seek & to save that which was lost*, Luke 19. 10 and Ephes. 2. 13, 14. *But now in Christ Jesus they who sometimes were afar-off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ; for he is our peace, who hath made both one.* In verse the tenth, is a description of our state without Christ, *being aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, being strangers from the Covenant of promise, and having no hope, and without God in the world.* This is a description of our unacquaintance with God. But Christ makes up the breach, and that by a double Act.

First, by Covenant with the Father, to make man fit for communion with him.

Secondly, His giving man assurance that the Father will receive him upon his return.

This then is the great design in all those glorious accomplishments of Christ; for this, he left his Fathers bosome, that he might bring us into

acquaintance with the Father; for this end did he who thought it no robbery to be equal with the Father, make himself of no reputation, and took upon him the *form of a servant*, and was made in the *likeness of man*; and being found in fashion of a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, *even the death of the Cross*, that he might bring man into a re-union with God; for this end did Christ live a wearisome troublesome life among a company of Rebells and Enemies, as if a man should live among Toads and Serpents: So that he cryed out, as weary of any longer abiding with them, *Oh faithless generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?* For this did he make himself an *offering for sin*; that by taking away sin, he might bring men to God. This is the great purpose of Christ in all his offices. Ye have heard of the three Offices of the Mediator, that he is a *Priest*, a *Prophet* and a *King*. This is the end of the Priestly Office. The purpose of Christs offering up himself a Scarifice, was by satisfying the justice of God, to make way for sinners return to God. This is the end of his prophetical Office, to lead men into knowledg and acquaintance with God. This is the end of his Kingly Office; that governing them, and ruling their hearts by his Spirit, he might effectually bring men to God, to acquaintance with him. Now then, since this is the great design of God in his great dispensation towards man, to keep men in acquaintance with himself, and to reduce him when he had lost it; doth it not concern us to do our part for the bringing to pass this great work? shall God lose his end in making us, and in setting man in the world

world every way furniſhed for his ſervice? and ſhall God loſe his end in ſending his Son to receive us, when we had forſaken him? Shall Chriſt leave his Fathers boſom to bring us home to the Father, and ſhall we refuſe to return? Shall he pour out his ſoul, an offering for ſin, that he might make way for our acceſs to God, *that we who were far off, might be made nigh by the blood of Chriſt?* and ſhall we fruſtrate all by our refuſing to go to him? ſhall Chriſt come and offer us his help and direction to come to the Father, and ſhall we abide ſtill ſtrangers? Shall the Kings Son come into our Cottages to invite us to dwell with his Father at Court, and ſhall we ſhut the door upon him, eſteeming our Cottages better than his Pallace.

Secondly, It is the duty of man to acquaint himſelf with God, becauſe therein is the improvement of his higheſt excellency. Every one acknowledgeth an excellency in man, above all the reſt of this lower world: Now what is this excellency of man? Is it not that he is made in a capacity of knowing God, and enjoying God, and having Communion with God? This is the height of his glory, Jer. 9. 23, 24. *Thus ſaith the Lord, let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor the rich man in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he underſtands and knoweth me, that I am the Lord that exerciſe loving kindneſs, and righteouſneſs in the earth, and judgment, for in theſe things I delight, ſaith the Lord.* Yee ſee here, wherein man is to glory, for which he may value himſelf as truly glorious. In his underſtanding and knowing of God, man ſtandeth above the reſt of the Creature

tures, in that he is a rational intellectual Agent. This is part of the Image of God, even knowledg, *Col.* 3. 15 *which is renewed in knowledg after the Image of him that created him.* The nigher any thing reſembleth God, the greater is the excellency of that thing; now in this we reſemble God more than any other Creature, in that we are knowing, underſtanding Agents; and the higheſt improvement of this excellency of man is in the knowledg of God, and acquaintance with God, *Prov.* 20. 27. *The ſpirit of a man is called the candle of the Lord*; that is, it is a light ſet up in the ſoul, to direct the ſoul to a diſcovery of God. This is the higheſt improvement of our greateſt excellency, & this is the excellency of man above other Creatures: this is that whereby one man excels another. Who are thoſe whoſe names are as precious ointment poured forth? who are thoſe which have obtained a good report? Are not they thoſe who were moſt acquainted with God; *Enoch* is ſaid to walk with God; an expreſſion which ſignifies intimate acquaintance with God; and therefore was *tranſlated that he ſhould not ſee death.* And *Noah*, whoſe family alone was preſerved when God deſtroyed the old World by water, he was ſaid to walk with God, *Gen.* 6. 9. Among all the ſons of men he kept cloſe to God; and God took care of him alone. *Abraham* who was the Father of the Faithful, he was called *the Friend of God. Moſes* who was the Mediator of the old Covenant, he was ſaid to *ſpeak with God face to face, as a man ſpeaketh to his friend.* I might make mention of many more, who were the excellent ones of the earth; becauſe they did delight in God, & God delighted in them, *Mal.* 3. 16. 17.

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They that feared the Lord, ſpake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard: and the book of remembrance was written for them that fear the Lord, and that thought upon his name: And they ſhall be mine, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, in the day when I make up my Jewels. Ye ſee how God accounts of thoſe that are of his acquaintance, that met together and ſpake of God, and that thought upon his name; he reckons them amongſt his Jewels his peculiar Treaſure: Such honour have all thoſe that are acquainted with God. Ye ſee then the excellency of man above all the reſt of the other Creatures. Now if man fail in this which is his higheſt excellency, he will become the vileſt of Creatures. Every thing if it fail in its chief end and purpoſe, and higheſt excellency, becomes baſe and of no account: *If ſalt loſe its ſavour* (ſaith our Saviour) *it is good for nothing.* If man have loſt his acquaintance with God, he is henceforth good for nothing. The mind of man is his eye, by which he is to behold God; now if this eye be blind, if the light be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs! The *Jews* in *Ezek.* 15. 1. are likned to a Vine, which, if it be barren, is good for no uſe: Shall wood be taken thereof for any work? It is fit for nothing but to burn. So it is in man, his great uſe and excellency is his acquaintance with God: now if he fails in this, he is good for nothing. Verily, man is a baſe, vile, worthleſs thing without acquaintance with God. None are leſs eſteemed among men, than they that want wiſdome to converſe among men. None are leſs eſteemed before God, than they that know him not, that have not acquaintance with him, to converſe

verſe with him. Ye ſee wherein the excellency and worth of man conſiſteth, and that if there be a deformity, where ought to be our chiefeſt beauty, the whole is accounted as a deformed piece. It concerns us then to look that we keep our glory unſpotted, our excellency in its due value; that we do not degrade our ſelves below what God hath placed us in. If we are not acquainted with God, our ſouls ſerve us to little purpoſe: it is a cauſing the Prince, the Soul, to go on foot, and to ſerve the body, which ſhould be as a ſervant; it is to let the candle of the Lord burn out in waſte.

Thirdly, Another enforcement of this duty of Acquaintance with God, is this. If we refuſe acquaintance with God, it is a ſlighting the greateſt of all the mercies that God beſtowes. Favors are to be valued, either by their proper excellencies, or according to the good will of him that beſtowes them: both theſe wayes this is to be accounted the greateſt of mercies. In Gods giving us leave to be acquainted with him, he gives out himſelf to be known, to be loved; to be converſed with, to be enjoyed. What greater gift can God give than himſelf? God is the portion of his people, he is the greateſt portion, the ſureſt, the moſt ſuitable, and the only durable portion. Thus they that know him eſteem of him. *Pſal.* 73. 26. *My fleſh & my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, & portion for ever*, *Pſal.* 16 5, 6. *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance: the lines are fallen to me in a pleſant place, yea, I have a goodly heritage. Bleſſed are the people that are in ſuch a caſe; yea, bleſſed are the people whoſe God is the Lord.* No

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greater mercy can be beſtowed upon any people, family, or perſon, than this, for God to dwell among them. If we value this mercy according to the excellency and worth of that which is beſtowed, it is the greateſt; if we value it according to the good will of him that gives it, it will appear likewiſe to be the greateſt favour. The greatneſs of the good will of God in giving himſelf to be our acquaintance, is evident in the nature of the gift. A man may give his eſtate to them to whom his love is not very large; but he never gives himſelf but upon ſtrong affection. God gives abundantly to all the works of his hands, he cauſeth the Sun to ſhine upon the evil, and upon the good; and the rain to deſcend upon the juſt and the unjuſt: But it cannot be conceived, that he ſhould give himſelf to be a Portion, a Friend, Father, Husband, but in abundance of Love. Whoſoever therefore ſhall refuſe acquaintance with God, ſlighted the greateſt favour that ever God did beſtow upon man. Now conſider what a high charge this is; to abuſe ſuch a kindneſs from God, is an act of the greateſt vileneſs. *David* was never ſo provoked, as when the King of *Ammon* abuſed his kindneſs in his Ambaſſadors, after his fathers death. And God is highly provoked when his greateſt mercies, beſtowed in the greateſt love, are rejected, and caſt away. What could God give more and better than himſelf? And how heavy will this imputation be! Theſe are thoſe that look upon God, as not worth being acquainted with. Let us therefore conſider how we ſhall be able to ſtand to theſe Accuſations. Shall we not be ſpeechleſs, when theſe things ſhall be charged

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upon us? Shall we not be confounded, when we ſtand to the trial of him to whom we had offered theſe great indignities? How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, ſo great a mercy?

Fourthly, It concerns us to acquaint our ſelves with God, for without it we are in a neceſſity of ſin, and miſery.

1. The ſoul unacquainted with God is in a neceſſity of ſinning, *Epheſ.* 4. 14. *Having their underſtanding darkned, alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their hearts.* For want of acquaintance with God, every thought and imagination of their heart is evil continually, *Rom.* 30. 10, 11. *There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that underſtands, there is none that ſeeketh after God.* Not underſtanding, nor ſeeking after God, is the neceſſary cauſe that there is *none doth good.* The ſoul of man is an Active *being*, which is continually in motion; if it be not in motion to God and in God, it will be in motion from God. Hence it is that the prayer of the wicked is an abomination: that which goes for prayer, God abhors, becauſe they are not acquainted with him, *Iſa.* 1. 3. *The ox knows his owner, and the aſs his maſters crib, but* Iſrael *doth not know me*, verſ. 13. 14. To this, ſaith he, *your incenſe is abomination unto me, their new moons and ſabbaths, the calling of aſſemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even your ſolemn meetings.* Now the reaſon why there is a neceſſity of ſin without acquaintance with God is, cauſe whatſoever is not done with a good heart, is not good, *Luk.* 6. 45. *The good man out of the good treaſure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and*

and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil fruit: for out the of abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. As an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, so an evil heart cannot bring forth a good action. Now without knowledg, the heart is not good, *Prov.* 19. 2. *That the soul be without knowledg is not good.* And there is no knowledg like the knowledg of God, And acquaintance with him, to make the heart good, *Hos.* 4. 2. *Because there is not truth, nor mercy, nor knowledg of God in the land; therefore by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out*, &c. Thus want of knowledg of God, & acquaintance with God, we may plainly see, is the necessary cause of sin. Now there is no greater evil on this side Hell then that of a necessity of sinning, 2. *Pet.* 2, 14. Those of which it is said, *they cannot cease from sinning*, are called *cursed children*. He that chooseth any sin rather than affliction, doth it through the blindness of his mind. This is laid as a heavy accusation, *Job* 39. 21. *For this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.* To choose iniquity rather than affliction, is the greatest folly imaginable. It is one great part of the misery of Hell, that they never cease from sinning; and this is the greatest misery on earth, our being so much under the power of sin. I appeal to any gracious soul that hath the feeling of the burden of sin; what is it's great trouble and sorrow? is it not because of sin? What are his secret moans to God? is it not the sence of corruption? *Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death*, saith *Paul*, *Rom.* 7. He had been complaining of the mass of corruption that did still press hard upon him, and in

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the ſtrong workings of his ſpirit againſt it, he calls it *The body of death.* It was as grievous to him as if he had been bound to a ſtinking rotten carcaſe. How wretched then is the ſtate of every ſoul unacquainted with God? Who can do nothing but ſin, becauſe they want the right rule of action, a right pattern of imitation, a right principle for action, a right object for action, a right end for action, the only aſſiſtance of action. It concerns us then as we make any difference between good and evil, if we have any reſpect unto holineſs and purity before ſin and iniquity, to ſee to get acquaintance with God; becauſe without acquaintance with God, we are in a woful neceſſity of ſinning.

2. Without acquaintance with God, we are in a neceſſity of miſery. Indeed ſin is a great miſery; and to be in a neceſſity of ſinning, is part of the neceſſity of miſery. But beſides that, there is a neceſſity of miſery of another kind. What is the great imployment of men unacquainted with God? Men labour in the very fire, and weary themſelves for very vanity, *Habak.* 2. 13. *This was the miſery of men, becauſe they know not God.* But in *verſ* 14. there is a promiſe of better days, *When the earth ſhall be filled with the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea.* Then and not till then will there be a deliverance from labouring in the fire, when there is the knowledg of God. The reaſon of it is, becauſe true ſatisfaction and peace cannot be, till our deſires and enjoyments are like; and this cannot be, till the ſoul is acquainted with God: For, nothing can fill up the deſires of the ſoul but God. The ſoul of man is mighty ſpacious, ſo that it cannot be filled with the world;

world; and while it feels an emptineſs, it ſtill cryes out for more, and cannot be filled tell it be filled with the fulneſs of God, *Epheſ.* 3. 19 The prodigal ſon had nothing but husks to feed upon, when he was gon from his fathers houſe; he would fain have filled his belly with the husks, but could not; they were not food for the ſoul. When we are departed from *God*, we have nothing to feed on but the world, and we would fill our ſouls with the world, but cannot; for it is not food for the ſoul. *Acquaintance* with God is the food of the ſoul, *Job* 23. 12. *I have eſteemed the words of his mouth, more then my neceſſary food.* So that a ſoul that is not acquainted with God, is famiſhed for want of food, *Pſal.* 42. 2. *My ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God.* When *ſhall I come & appeare before God?* *David* was acquainted with God, but for want of an actual enjoyment, how doth he here breath out the trouble of his ſpirit? *As the Hart panteth after the waterbrooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee O God.* The ſoul is ſtill panting. Some pant after the duſt of the earth, *Amos* 2. 7. Theſe were of the Serpents ſeed, whoſe curſe from God was, *Duſt ſhalt thou eat:* but the ſeed of Chriſt, they pant for God, and they that pant after *God* ſhall be filled with the fulneſs of *God*: but he that panteth after any thing beſides *God*, will never find any fulneſs; he will feed as upon the duſt of the earth. And what can follow but diſſatisfaction and miſery? Acquaintance with *God* is the only way to be find from a neceſſity of ſin and miſery.

Fifthly, Acquaintance with *God* is the duty of man, becauſe *God* himſelf doth acquaint himſelf with man. Shall the King ſeek after acquaintance

with the meaneſt of his ſubjects, and he refuſe acquaintance with his Soveraign? ſhall God acquaint himſelf with man, and ſhall not man acquaint himſelf with God! It is expected among men, that the inferiour ſhould ſeek for acquaintance with the Superiour, and not the Superiour to the inferiour; but yet God out of his wonderful love hath ſought firſt to man for acquaintance. Thus *Prov.* 8. 31. it is ſaid concerning the ſon of God, who is meant by *the Eternal Wiſdom of the Father, that he rejoyced in the habitable parts of the earth, & his delight was with the ſons of men.* If God thus delights in converſe and acquaintance with the ſons of men, how much more ought men to rejoyce in converſe and acquaintance with God, *Iſa.* 65. 1. God ſaith, *I am found of them that ſought me not.* All men were departed from God, and not a man that did ſeek after God; there is none that underſtands or ſeeks after God, yet God is found of them. The good ſhepherd ſeeks his loſt ſheep, before the ſheep ſought him, *Cant.* 5. 2. When the ſoul is aſleep, it hears the voice of its Beloved that knocks, ſaying, *Open to me my ſiſter, my love, my Dove, my undefiled,* Rev. 3.20. There Chriſt ſaith to the revolting Church, that he was ready to ſpew them out of his mouth, *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock: If any man will hear me, and open the door, I will come in and ſup with him, and he with me,* Pſal. 68.18. *Thou haſt aſcended on high, thou haſt led captivity captive, thou haſt received gifts for men, ye for the rebellious alſo that the Lord God might dwell among them.* Is it not becoming then that man ſhould open when God knocks? He ſeeks to dwell among the rebellious; is it not fit that man ſhould enter into acquaintance

quaintance with God, when God doth thus acquaint himſelf with man? Thus I have opened to you the Nature of Acquaintance with God, and evidenced it to be the *Duty of Man*, to acquaint himſelf with God; let us now make ſome improvements of this Truth.

USE I.

Firſt, Is there to be an aquaintance between the ſoul and God? Let us then ſtand and wonder at the great condeſcention of God! This may ſurpriſe our ſouls with an extaſie of admiration, that God ſhould dwell with man; that the mighty *Jehovâ* ſhould have ſuch reſpect to the work of his hands, *Pſal.* 113. 5, 6. *Who is like unto the Lord, who dwelleth on high, who humbled himſelf to behold the things that are in heaven, and in earth?* The Pſalmiſt admired God, that he humbled himſelf to behold things that are in heaven; and how much more then is he to be admired, that he humbled himſelf to acquaint himſelf with man? Let us then be filled with admiration, that God ſhould take us ſo nigh unto himſelf. As *Pſal.* 8 4. *What is man that thou art mindful of him! or the ſon of man that thou ſhouldſt viſit him!* And Job 7 17, 18. *What is man that thou ſhouldſt magnifie him! and that thou ſhouldſt ſet thy heart upon him! and that thou ſhouldeſt viſit him every Morning!* Man in the pride of his heart ſeeth no ſuch great matter in it, but an humble ſoul is filled with aſtoniſhment, *Iſ.* 57. 15. *Thus ſaith the high and lofty One, which inhabiteth Eternity, whoſe Name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place: with him alſo that is of a contrite & humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the*

humble, and to revive the hearts of the contrite ones. Oh ſaith the humble ſoul, will the Lord have reſpect unto ſuch a vile worm as I am? will the Lord acquaint himſelf with ſuch a ſinful wretch as I am? Will the Lord open his Arms, his boſome, his heart to me? ſhall ſuch a loathſome creature as I find favour in his eyes? In *Ezeck.* 16.15. We have a relation of the wonderful condeſcention of God to man, who is there reſembled to a wretched Infant caſt out in the day of its birth in its bloud, and filthineſs, no eye pitying it; ſuch loathſome creatures are we before God, and yet when he paſſ'd by, and ſaw us polluted in our bloud, *he ſaid unto us, live.* It is doubled, becauſe of the ſtrength of its nature, *it was the time of Love, verſ.* 8. This was love indeed that God ſhould take a filthy wretched thing, and ſpread his skirts over it, and cover its nakedneſs, and ſwear unto it, and enter into a covenant with it, and make it his; that is, that he ſhould eſpouſe this loathſome thing to himſelf, that he would be an husband to it; this is love unfathomable, love unconceivable, ſelf-principle love; this is the love of God to man; for God is love: Oh the depth of the riches of the bounty and goodneſs of God! How is his love wonderful, and his grace paſt finding out! How do you find and feel your hearts affected upon the report of theſe things? do you not ſee matter of admiration, and cauſe of Wonder? Are you not, as it were, lanched forth into an Ocean of goodneſs, where you can ſee no ſhore, nor feel no bottom? Ye may make a Judgment of your ſelves by the motions and affections that ye feel in your ſelves at the mention of this. For thus Chriſt judged of the Faith

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of the Centurion, that said unto him, *Lord I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof*, Mat. 8. 8 *When Jesus heard this, he marvelled, and said to them that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.* If then you feel not your souls mightily affected with this condescention of God; Say thus unto your souls, What aileth thee, O my soul, that thou art no more affected with the goodness of God; Art thou dead, that thou canst not feel? Or art thou blind, that thou canst not see thy self compassed about with astonishing goodness! Behold, the King of glory descending from the habitation of his Majesty, and coming to visit thee; heareſt not thou his voice, saying, *Open to me my sister: behold, I stand at the door and knock. Lift up your selves, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in.* Behold, O my soul, how he waits still while thou hast refused to open to him! O the wonder of his goodness! O the condescention of his Love, to visit me, to sue unto me, to wait upon me, to be acquainted with me! Thus work up your souls into an astonishment at the condescention of God.

USE 2.

Secondly, Is there to be acquaintance between the soul and God? Then let us learn to make a right judgment of our own Excellency; let us judg of our selves as too high and noble to converse with this base and beggarly world. I am of a noble Original, than to debase my self to such mean things; I am the off-spring of God, and shall I acquaint my self with earth? I am of

the family of God, and ſhall I converſe with Sathan? Is there bread enough in my Fathers houſe, and ſhall I periſh for hunger? Lift up thy ſelf, O my ſoul, ſhake off the intanglements of the fleſh, break out of that bondage of the Devil, trample upon the glory of the world, and ſcorn to let out thy precious deſires upon dung and droſs, get the Moon under thy feet, cloath thy ſelf with the Sun, put on the ſon of righteouſneſs, come into the palace of God, and acquaint thy ſelf with him, for this is thy glory, this is thy excellency. Ye precious ones, who can call God Father, and the Son Bother, who have fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, who may have communion with the Holy Ghoſt? What do you lying among the Pots? What do you raking in Dunghills? What do you converſing with the World? Have a hol ſcorn of theſe things as below the dignity of your ſouls: know your worth, eſteem of your ſelves, as of more value then all theſe lower Treaſures. This is your glory and your excellency, that ye are of Gods acquaintance, that ye are Sons of God. Heirs of God, and joynt-Heirs with Chriſt, that ye underſtand and know God.

There are two things wherein moſt men are miſtaken.

Firſt, In the Nature of *Pride*. Some look upon that only as Pride, which manifeſteth it ſelf in coſtly Apparel, and bodily Ornaments, beyond the degree and rank of the perſon. Some look no further than the carriage of one man towards another. Now favourably conſider with me, that the greateſt Pride in the world is mans undue eſteem of himſelf toward God; and this

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is in the heart of every one by nature. Every one by nature doth lift up himself against God, goes about to dethrone God, and to crown himself: Every one takes council in his heart against the Lord, saying *Let us break his bands asunder, and cast his cords from us.* This is the voice of every one that dares willfully to sin. *We will not have God to rule over us.* Yet this is the working of the Pride of a man against God, to thurst God out of the Throne of his Majesty, and to set himself in. For what is Gods glory and respect among his creatures? Is it not this; that he being the *beginning*, and *Author* of *all*, should be likewise the *end* of *all?* And this is the very purpose of God in making of man, that having received himself from God, he should have what he might freely give up to God; so that all man is, and all that he hath, is to be offered to God, as the end and center of all. Now a sinning creature brings God under to serve him, to provide for him, Now though this Pride of man against God be not so much taken notice of, yet it is the very daring sin of the World. It is indeed to be wondered at, that ever creatures did cast out the first thoughts of such an attempt. Now consider how far mans Pride is from his true Excellency in his Union with God. We are therefore to distinguish between that high esteem that man is to have of himself, and pride. For man to look upon himself as a *noble being*, and of rank above all the *natural world*, it is not Pride, for thus he is (being a Spiritual understanding Agent) in a capacity of being acquainted with God, of being united to God, and, as I may say, of exchanging himself with God.

Secondly, Another miſtake of moſt men, is, concerning their *Dignity* and *Excellency*, and in the rule and meaſure of their *Excellency*. Moſt meaſure their Dignity by the advantage which they have over others in this world; As ſome in their Power and Authority; ſome in their Friends and Relations; ſome in their Riches and Eſtates; ſome in their Wiſdom and Faculties; ſome in their ſtrength and Power. And what more univerſal evil is there then this, for every one in to ſomething or other to lift himſelf up in his own eſteem, and in his thoughts to tread upon others, as ſomething inferiour to himſelf? But men lie blinded in their own deluſions, not conſidering what is the true Excellency of man; nor know the right rule by which mans worth is to be judged of. The way for us to judg rightly concerning our ſelves, is to ſee how we ſtand towards *God*. *God* is the perfection of excellency; and the nigher we are to *God*, the greater is our excellency. This is the greatneſs of a Nation, to be nigh to *God*, *Deut.* 4. 7. *What Nation is there ſo great which hath God ſo nigh unto them?* And *Amos* 8. 7. *God* is called the Excellency of *Jacob*. God ſweareth not by any thing below himſelf; therefore God is here meant, *Iſa.* 60. 19. God is called the *Glory of his people*. *The Lord ſhall be to thee an everlaſting light, and thy God thy glory*. Now *God* is the glory of thoſe that are acquainted with him.

Firſt, By vertue of the Relation wherein *God* ſtands towards them. An intimate Relation to thoſe that are perſons of Dignity, & Worth, doth communicate Worth and Dignity to thoſe who are ſo related to them. As the ſon of a mean man

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is not ſo highly valued and eſteemed as the ſon of a Prince. *David* reckoned it to be a great thing to be Son-in-law to a King, 1 *Sam.* 18 18. *Who am I, and what is my life, or my fathers Family in* Iſrael, *that I ſhould be ſon-in law to the King?* Thus are we to reckon it our Dignity and Excellency to be in nigh relation to God, to be ſons of God, to be heirs of God, and to be the friends of God, what greater honor then this to be in ſuch a nigh relation to the God of Glory? Now the Excellency that we have from this Relation, ariſeth from the excellency of that act which is the Foundation of this Relation, and that is our being born of God, as we are Sons, *Joh.* 1.12,13. God marrying us to himſelf as he is our husband, *Jer.* 3. *Turn, O back-ſliding Children, ſaith the Lord, for I am married unto you.* God takes us into fellowſhip and communion, and acquaintance with himſelf, as he makes us his friends, and his acquaintance. This act of God doth inſtamp a Worth and Excellency upon man, as the impreſſion of the Kings Seal upon Wax, and makes it of value, *Rev.* 22.4. It is here ſpoken as the glory of the ſervants of God, *Thoſe that follow the Lamb, they ſhall ſee his face, and his Name ſhall be in their foreheads*; that is, God hath choſen and, as it were marked them out for his own: and this marking them, and owning them, it ſets a high Dignity upon them, ſuch as ſecures them from the Curſe that is to be upon all beſides, as *Revel.* 9. 4. They are commanded to hurt none *but theſe who have not the ſeal of God on their foreheads.* This Relation of the ſoul to God, gives the ſoul an excellency, as it doth intereſt the ſoul in the glory and excellency of God himſelf; they are Gods, and Gods is theirs, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. *I*

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will dwell in them, and walk with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, verſ. 17. He argues from the dignity of this relation, that they ſhould count themſelves too good to converſe with the world; *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye ſeparated, ſaith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing: and I will receive you, and be a father to you, & you ſhall be my ſons & daughters, ſaith the Lord.* Thus you ſee the dignity that is upon the ſoul by its acquaintance with God. Our relation to God in our acquaintance with him, doth ennoble us, lift us above the world, make us that we are too good for the company of thoſe that are not acquainted with God. It is then no pride in us thus to eſteem of our ſelvs, to have high thoughts of our ſelves, becauſe of that acquaintance which our ſouls are to have with God. It is pride for to think too highly of our ſelves: but it is ſobriety to think of our ſelves according to that acquaintance which we have with God, *Rom.* 12. 3, *I ſay, through the grace of God given to me, to every one that is among you, not to think of himſelf more highly then he ought to think; but to think ſoberly according as God hath dealt to every man the meaſure of faith.* Here the Apoſtle commands them to meaſure the eſteem which they have of themſelves, by the meaſure of faith which they have from God; becauſe by faith they come to be valued excellent in the eye of God. So likewiſe we are to meaſure our eſteem which we have of our ſelves, by the meaſure of our acquaintance which we have with God! becauſe by acquaintance with him, we come to be truly excellent. And while we do thus, we ſhall not think more highly of our ſelves then we ought to thing: for

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while we account our ſelves excellent becauſe of our acquaintance with God, we in lifting up our ſelves magnifie God; and while we thus glory, we glory in the Lord. 1 *Cor.* 1. 31. But now herein we to are beware of two things.

Firſt, That we diſtinguiſh carefully between our capacity of being acquainted with God, and our being actually acquainted with him: for our capacity, or being ſo as that we may be acquainted with God, is of no worth, unleſs we be actually acquainted with him. We are in a remote capacity naturally as men, and we are in a more nigh capacity by the mercy and covenant of God; but this adds no true worth to the ſoul without the actual acquaintance of the ſoul with God. Yea, man is the worſe for this, if he be without the other; for if man being made fit for enjoyment of God, and communion with him, never attain to an enjoyment of him, he becomes more vile then thoſe things whoſe nature is inferiour, if they attain to the perfection of that nature. And it is like to fare worſe with man, if he fall ſhort of the glory of God, becauſe he was capable of the glory of God, then with beaſts which are not capable of it. And again, in regard of that more nigh capacity wherein we are by Jeſus Chriſt of acquaintance with God, if we are not really acquainted with God, we ſhall thereby not only have no addition of excellency, but thereby we ſhall be more vile and miſerable: and therefore thoſe who through the mercy of God have been in the viſible Church, and have heard of the good will of God to man through Chriſt, and know that God is ready to entertain them into acquaintance with himſelf; if they ſhall fall

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ſhort of this, their condemnation will be greater then that of thoſe who never heard of Gods invitation, and his grace in Jeſus Chriſt. If we therefore ſhall glory in our capacity of being of the acquaintance of God, and neglect to be really acquainted with him, we do but as the *Jews* of old, who cried out, *The temple of the Lord are theſe*, Jer. 7. 4. And the nigher we are to God, if we do not come to a thorow cloſure with him, the nigher we are to the ſtroak of his Wrath: as the nigher any is to Musket-ſhot, the greater will the force of it be upon him. Diſtinguiſh therefore between our capacity of being acquainted with God, and our actual acquaintance with him.

Secondly, we muſt be ware leſt in our eſteem of our ſelves, we lay the foundation of our glory in our ſelves. There is that in ever ones corrupt nature which doth provoke him to it: ſo that I dare boldly ſay, that there is not a man in his corrupt natural ſtate, who doth not ſome way or other lift up himſelf in his own eſteem for ſomething of his own. And we are apt to make every ſpiritual excellency to be matter for pride and ſelf-conceitedneſs. We do not ſufficiently eye God as the Fountain, the Author, the Foundation, the Rule and Pattern of all our Excellency. Such is the way wherein God receiveth man to acquainrance with himſelf, that he might hide pride from his eyes, and that no fleſh might glory in his preſence, 1 *Cor.* 1. 29. If we therefore lay the foundation of our glory in our ſelves, and pleaſe our ſelves in the ſparks that we have kindled, we ſhall glory in our ſhame, and lie down in ſorrow. This high eſteem which we are to have of

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our ſelves, becauſe of our acquaintance with God, it doth not at all contradict that precious grace of humility, but they rather help forward one another; for the more any eſteems of himſelf, becauſe of that relation which he hath to God, the leſs is the eſteem of himſelf, becauſe of any thing of his own; the more we make God the matter of our glory, the leſs do we glory in our ſelves. The more we apprehend of our Excellency, being from God, the leſs account do we make of all other ſeeming Excellencies. When the light of the Sun ariſeth, than all Star-light diſappears.

Firſt, All Dignity we have, ſeems to ariſe from that relation which we have to God in acquaintance with him.

Secondly, By acquaintance with God, we come to have an abſolute poſitive Dignity which is real in our perſons, yet ſtill depending upon God: As by our union with Chriſt we come to have a righteouſneſs imputed, which is our juſtification; and a righteouſneſs likewiſe inherent, which is our ſanctification; ſo by our acquaintance with God, we have a dignity, as it were, imputed by our relation to God, and a dignity real, which is that excellency whereby we are made abſolutely better. By acquaintance with God, we come to be like God; and the Image of God in us, is the greateſt excellency that we are capable of. When *Moſes* had been fourty days in the Mount with God, his face did ſhine with ſuch a brightneſs, that the people could not behold him: ſo thoſe that converſe with God, they retain a luſter, which ſhines in their converſe with men. The Image or picture of any worthy perſon, is eſteem-

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ed by them that esteem the person, and this esteem of it, is from a relation which it hath to that person; but now the children of any person whom we love, being a lively image of their fathers person, have another value upon them, having not only a relation worthy, because of their resemblance in the outward lineament, but a real participation of nature and disposition, which they receive from their father: So there is an excellency in those that are acquainted with God, not only as being in Relation to him, but as receiving, and being partakers of the Divine Nature. As Children learn to pronounce their words according to the pronunciation of the Mother, or Nurse, with whom they converse, (as every one is apt to be formed unto the manner and disposition of the company wherein they most usually are) thus those who converse with God; they become in some measure like unto God; and this is positive personal excellency which those have which converse with God. Thus the Apostle *John* argueth concerning that perfection of glory and excellency, which hereafter is to be upon those that are the Sons of God. *But it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* In Heaven we shall be like God, because we shall see God; and on earth those that converse with God, shall in some measure be like God according to their measure of acquaintance with him And so *Paul* argues concerning this present life, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *But we all with open face beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the*

the Lord. Here we ſee clearly that beholding the glory of the Lord, doth change into the ſame image of God, and likewiſe that this image of God only is the glory of man; for that is meant by, *From glory to glory:* that is, from one degree of glorious ſimilitude, to another degree of glorious reſemblance and likeneſs to God. Thus ye have ſeen that the excellency of man conſiſteth in his acquaintance with God; and that by the vertue of his relation to God, he hath an imputed excellency; and an excellency by his propriety in God, in whom is all excellency: and that by his converſe with God, and acquaintance with him, he becomes really like God, which is his inherent excellency. Let us then reckon of our ſelves as thoſe who have their Dignity and Excellency from God, and in this let us glory, That we know God, and are acquainted with God. This is the *Second Uſe* of this Propoſition.

USE 3.

Thirdly, If man ought to be acquainted with God; then let us all enquire into our ſelves; whether we are acquainted with him or no. Let us every one turn into our own boſoms, and ask our ſelves this queſtion; Thou haſt heard, O my ſoul, that which is thy great Duty, that which is the very end of thy Creation, and thy Redemption, and that the higheſt perfection of thy nobleſt faculty conſiſts in knowing God, and being acquainted with him, which contains a nigh union to him, and intimate converſe with him, and mutual communion to God, and from

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God, and radicated unmoveable love to God: these are excellent things O my soul, what is thy case? Art thou one of those precious ones, which converseſt oft with God, and talk oft of God, whom he will make up with his Jewels? Or art thou one of those wretched Creatures, who are alienated from the life of God, by reason of the ignorance that is in thee? Or art thou one of those who having been sometimes afar off, art now made nigh to God by the bloud of Christ, and so art lead into fellowship and communion with the Father and the Son by the Spirit? Or art thou one of those who looks upon God afar off, and upon whom God looks afar off? I beseech you every one of you, deal seriously and accurately with your selves in this inquiry, for it is most certain, that most men in the world, yea in the visible Church, are not acquainted with God. Thus it hath been in all generations from the beginning of the World, and thus it is at this day: the people of God have been like a little flock of sheep, while the rest are like locusts, covering the whole face of the earth. The people of God have still complained that they are but as the gleaning of the vintage, and as two or three Olive-berries in the top of the utmost branches, when the rest have been gathered. The visible Church of God, in respect of the rest of the world, how small a part is it! In the visible Church; how few live up to their Religion, by any considerable profession! How little difference is there between most among us, and Heathens! And of those that profes, and lay claim to something beyond others among whom they live, how many betray their Profession by

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their wicked practice and worldly converſation? So that when we have made enquiry, there will remain very few of thoſe that are really acquainted with God, it concerns us then to be very diligent in enquiry, what is our caſe, how we ſtand toward God.

Secondly, I ſhall be the more earneſt in preſſing you upon a diligent ſearch into what acquaintance you have gotten with God; becauſe, I know that thoſe that have leaſt acquaintance with God, are moſt apt to neglect this enquiry. It may be a tender ſoul that hath been much with God, will be ready upon the firſt hint to enter into the ſecrets of its own heart, to look over his evidences, to call to mind, when have I drawn nigh to God? When have I converſed with God? When have I communion with God? Hath my life been a walking with *God*? Have I dwelt with *God*, and made my abode with him? Thus the ſoul that makes high account of its acquaintance with *God*, will be trying and examining it ſelf; and it may be upon its more awakened ſigns of its ſometimes departing from *God*, or feeling ſome preſent ſtrangeneſs, it will be apt to conclude of it ſelf, ſurely I am none of thoſe precious ones, whoſe life is a converſe with *God*. But the common generation of the world, Oh how hardly will they be brought to ask themſelves this queſtion, whether they are of the acquaintance of *God* or no! How often have they been urged with a great and vehement affection upon trial, how their ſouls ſtand towards *God*? and hitherto they have negelected it. Many are inconſiderate as to think what is ſpoken is nothing to them: they come and ſit in the Con-

gregation, but their hearts are out of reach, out of the ſhot of the Word; ſo they go away, and the word to them is, as if it had not been. Many are ſo light, and vain, and frothy in their ſpirits, as that the ſtreams will almoſt as ſoon return to their fountain, as they will be perſwaded to turn in and enquire into their own ſouls. In all naturally there is an averſeneſs to come to the light, that their works and hearts may be manifeſted. If I ſhould come to you one by one, and beſeech you with the greateſt earneſtneſs, wherewith I were able, when you go from the congregation to take opportunity to go in ſecret, and enter upon tryal with your hearts, and ask your ſelves throughly this queſtion, and let them not alone till you have a clear determinate anſwer, whether you are in a ſtate of acquaintance with *God*; I fear you would go, one to his pleaſures, another to this vanity, and another to his covetouſneſs, and almoſt all of you neglect this work of ſo great concernment. Let me therefore urge you withall earneſtneſs, that you will not account it a ſmall matter, whether you be acquainted with *God* or not; and ſo neglect this trial of your ſelves: But bring your hearts up roundly to the examination, yeild not to their unreaſonable withdrawings, force them to anſwer. If you make any account of the charge of *God*, if you make any account of the excellency of man, if you would not loſe the higheſt priviledge of the Creature, if you have any eſteem of the life of heaven, know your ſelves in this, whether you are in a ſtate of acquaintance with *God*, and be ſerious and diligent in this enquiery.

Thirdly, Becauſe men are ſo exceeding apt to be

be miſtaken, and to miſapprehend concerning themſelves, that they are in a ſtate of acquaintance with God, while they are meer ſtrangers unto him; ſuch as thoſe whom our Saviour ſpeaks of, *Matth.* 7. 22,23. *Many will ſay to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name, and in thy name have caſt out Devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?* & then he will profeſs unto them, *I never knew you; depart from me ye workers of iniquity.* They take it for granted, that becauſe of ſuch priviledges, & gifts, & common graces which they had, therefore they were well acquainted with Chriſt; but our Saviour anſwereth, *I never knew you*; that is, I never had any acquaintance with you. Such are thoſe who are reſembled to us by five fooliſh Virgins, *Matth.* 25. 11. The five fooliſh Virgins come when the door is ſhut, and ſay, *Lord, Lord, open unto us; but he anſwereth, Verily I ſay unto you, I know you not*; that is, never had acquaintance with you: you never knew me in the time of your life, and I will not know you now: you were aſhamed to own me before men, and I will be aſhamed to own you before my Father. Men are ſo apt to be miſtaken in Judgment of themſelves, that they think themſelves rich and encreaſing with goods, and to have need of nothing, when they are wretched, miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked. And this makes *David*, *Pſal.* 139. 24. to cry out after he had been trying himſelf, *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and ſee if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlaſting.* This unaptneſs in us to make a right judgement of our ſelves in our relation to God, ariſeth,

First, From that deep root of ſelf-love that is in us by nature, whereby we are apt to apprehend well of our ſelves, and pleaſe our ſelves with a good conceit of our ſelves, though we are never ſo bad. And ſuch is the nature of this affection, that it blinds our eyes, and prejudiceth the mind, that it cannot make a right judgement. As affection in ſome Parents to their Children, makes them reckon that which is a blemiſh, to be a beauty in their children; ſo doth inordinate ſelf-love work in men, in the judgment of themſelves. Men when they judge themſelves, they look into a flattering glaſs which preſents them in greater beauty then that which is their own.

Secondly, we judge amiſs of our ſelves, becauſe we take not a right rule for our judgments, as thoſe whom *Paul* ſpeaks, 2 *Corinthians* 10. 12. *Some commend themſelves, but they meaſure themſelves by themſelves, and comparing themſelves with themſelves, are not wiſe.* If we take our ſelves to be the rule and meaſure, then we cannot diſcern our own crookedneſs and irregularneſs.

Thirdly, We judge amiſs of our ſelves, becauſe of the deceitfulneſs of our hearts. *The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked; who can know it? Jer.* 17. 9. *Groſs wickedneſs is apparent to the pur-blind eye*; but where there is an abſtaining from groſs outward ſins, there are ſpecial workings of Corruption, ſuch as pride, ſelf-love, diſtruſt of God & love of the world; any of which ſhut up the ſoul againſt God, as with bolts and bars; and theſe lying inward are not diſcerned. Other accounts may be given of the unaptneſs to make a due judgment of our ſelves: it concerns us therefore

to be exact in our tryal, and truſt not to a ſudden anſwer; for we are ready to make a ſhort work of it, and to ſave our ſelves the labour, and to ſit down with charitable thoughts of our ſelves. Whatſoever anſwer therefore our hearts give us, let us ſee cleared, and have ſuch reaſon for it, that we may know how to proceed with our ſelves, upon a right judgment of our ſelves. The chief work of trial in this particular acquaintance with God, will be from thoſe particulars wherein I opened the nature of the ſouls acquaintance with God. Let us therefore take thoſe Heads and our own Experience of our ſelves, and by a rational deduction, let us find out our own eſtate.

As thus, Thoſe that are acquainted with God are brought nigh to God. Whereas ſometimes there was a ſtrangeneſs and remoteneſs, a vaſt ſeparation, now the partition is taken out of the way, and I am made one in Chriſt. I have took God to be my portion, and my Father; I have been a Prodigal, and have departed from him, but I finding my ſelf loſt and undone, and that nothing could ſatisfie my ſoul in the world, therefore I reſolved I would return to my Fathers houſe, and try if he would receive me again into his Family; and ſo I have done. I have caſt off my old converſe with the world, and with corruption; I have broken my league with Hell, and have entered into a covenant with the Father, through his Son Jeſus Chriſt; therefore I may comfortably conclude that I am now in a ſtate of acquaintance with God.

But if in the enquiry into my ſelf I find not theſe things, if I find that now I am as in former

dayes; I have felt no ſuch change in my ſelf, and that all things are with me as they were of old, I never was ſenſible of any loſs in my ſelf; I never knew what ſtrangeneſs and nighneſs to God meant; I never underſtood what union with God, and diſtance from God was; this ſignifies ill, it is a ſymptome of a bad ſtate; of a ſtate of unacquaintance with *God*.

2. So again, for our converſe with *God*. He that is acquainted with God, he hath had his converſe with God, he hath dwelt with God, and *God* with him; he hath ſupped with Chriſt, and Chriſt with him; his great buſineſs and employment hath been nigh *God*, in thoſe things wherein is moſt of *God*. If I find my ſoul much converſing with *God*, oft ſending out breathings to Heaven, oft caſting my eye towards *God*, if I find the great work of my mind to be with *God*, my great buſineſs lies in Heaven, my treaſure is laid up there, and my thoughts, and deſires, and joys, and delights, and meditations are there; I may conſortably conclude that I am in ſome meaſure acquainted with God. But if in the inquiry into my ſelf, I find that I have my whole converſe with the world, that I can afford no time for Prayer to *God* in my family, and in ſecret; if I find all the day long my cares, and deſires and thoughts, run out moſt naturally and fully without controle towards the things of the world, or that I will mind my ſelf in a natural carnal way, and mind not the things of *God*; this ſignifies to me my unacquaintance with God, and it will be an ungrounded preſumption in me to reckon of my ſelf any other then a ſtranger to him.

3. So for communion and fellowſhip, which

is in acquaintance. Thoſe that are intimately acquainted, their communion in the way of diſcourſe is very frequent, in making known their thoughts and apprehenſions, their fears and wants; their minds are open one to another, and that which is the propriety of one, is by their acquaintance communicated to the uſe of both. If then I can find in reviewing the workings of my ſoul, that there hath been this ſight of Heaven, this Spiritual Communion between my ſoul and *God*; that my heart hath been open to *God*; that I have gon to *God* when my heart hath been burdened with ſorrow, I have diſcharged it into the boſom of *God*, as into the boſom of a friend; that in my doubts I have betaken my ſelf to him, expecting comfort from him; that upon hearing his voice I have opened to him, and upon my opening he hath come in with ſmiles of love, and given me tokens of his favour; theſe things ſignifie a ſtate of acquaintance with *God*: but if I know not what it is to have given up my ſoul to *God*, to be his, and to have taken *God* to be mine, if I have had experience of receiving nothing elſe from *God*, but a partaking of the things of the world: if I have not been wont to communicate the workings of my mind to God, it betokeneth my unacquaintance with *God*.

4. And again, for that friendly working of love and affection in the ſoul towards *God*. Thoſe that are in a ſtate of acquaintance are ſuppoſed to comply with each other in kindneſs, and love, and good will, and affection. If then I can upon ſearch into my ſelf, find that *God* hath the he higheſt room in my affections, that my heart is his, that his love is prevailing with me, above the

love of all things beſides, & that I love thoſe that are his beloved for his ſake, then I have in me a ſign of regal acquaintance with God; for love is the very quinteſſence of acquaintance: but if in the ſearch into the workings of my mind I can find no ſuch friendly compliance, but that God was ſtill thwarting and croſſing my deſigns, that I ſhould find my ſelf better content if there were no God, and that thoſe workings of my mind that are about *God* are ſower, harſh, and tearing upon my ſpirit, then it is to be feared, that I have no acquaintance with *God*.

And haſt thou made an impartial inquiry into thy ſtate? And how ſtand things between thy Soul and *God*? Art thou acquainted with him, or art thou not? Conſider ſeriouſly O ſinners, that this is one of the weightieſt queſtions in the world; and if this queſtion were but well reſolved, it would put an end to a thouſand other queſtions. He that can ſay of *God* and Chriſt, this is my beloved, and this is my friend, he need not very ſolicitouſly ask what news? He hath heard good news from Heaven, which will eaſily ballance all, come what will come, he need not much paſs, as long as there ſtands that one Text in the Bible, *That all ſhall work together for good to them that love God.* He hath no cauſe to go a begging to the world, and to ſay, *who will ſhew me any good?* As long as the Lord hath ſhined upon him with the light of his countenance. He need not complain, what ſhall I do; I have loſt this or that dear friend; when he hath found him, who can make up all with one look, whom he can never loſe. In a word, he need not ask how ſhall I do to live? And

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what ſhall I eat, and what ſhall I drink, and wherewithall ſhall I be cloathed? So long as he knows that he hath a noble friend, who will eaſe him of all his care, and never ſee him want. Well then, haſt thou anſwered this great queſtion or not? Or wilt thou do by thy conſcience, as *Felix*, put it off and ſay, thou wilt hear of theſe matters, at ſome more convenient ſeaſon, and I wonder when that more convenient ſeaſon will be; and why not now, I pray? What ſeaſon more fit than the Preſent? I am ſure God ſaith, *Now is the acceptable time*; and do you know better than he? What haſt thou to do that is more neceſſary? Speak out I pray, is the following of thy pleaſures? Is the ſerving of Satan? Is the damming of thy Soul, more neceſſary than the ſaving of it? Is the life and death of a Soul nothing? Are everlaſting glory and miſery ſmall matters? Is the love or hatred of thy God ſo inconſiderable a thing? Awake O ſinner, what meaneſt thou? Ariſe ſpeedily and look about thee man. Conſider ſeriouſly as thou valueſt thy Soul, what beſt becomes a ſinner in thy condition: What anſwer ſhall I return to my Maſter? Are not theſe things worth the thinking of? Shall I ſay for all this, that thou art not at leiſure to look after an intereſt in his favour, or any thing that tends to it? Shall I tell him that thou haſt ſomthing of greater weight, and higher importance to trouble your head with? And do you in ſober ſadneſs think ſo? For you make account, *that* excuſe is ſufficient? I pray then make uſe of it your ſelf (for I dare not.) When God ſhall come to ask you, why you did no more vigorouſly

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mind the getting acquaintance with himſelf, tell him then if you think that anſwer will ſerve your turn, that you were not at leiſure, you had ſuch urgent occaſions which took up the whole of your time, ſuch and ſuch a friend you had, who ſent for you to the Tavern, and you could not poſſibly come when he invited you, tell him if you believe that plea will hold water, that you would have been glad to have come upon his invitation, but that you were taken up with ſuch good old friends, the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil. How do you think ſuch an anſwer will be taken? You may think to put us off with ſuch kind of reaſons as this: but do you hope by this anſwer to ſatisfie your Judge? Believe it ſinner, God will not thus be put off. Wherefore I do again with all the earneſtneſs I can for my ſoul renew by ſuit to thee, that thou wouldeſt act like a man in his wits; make ſome ſerious inquiry into the ſtate and condition of thy ſoul. And conſider for the Lords ſake again and again, before you ſend me away thus, what errand I come to you on: It is to treat with you about a rich match for thy poor undone ſoul: therefore conſider well what you do before you make light of this buſineſs, and know when you are well offered; believe it, *God* will not long ſend after you in this manner, and you are not like every day to have ſuch proffers; Divine Patience and Goodneſs will not always plead at this rate with you; *God* will ere long ſay, let them alone: the Lord will erre long ſpeak to ſcornful ſinners in ſuch language that will make their ears to tingle; he will deſpiſe and ſlight as well as they: and who is like to have the worſt of it at laſt,

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I leave to any rational man to judge? The time is coming, when your ungodly hearts ſhall ake, to ſee him whom you ſhall have had for your husband; when you ſhall have him for your Judge, whom you might have had for your Advocate. And though we could not get you to be willing to be acquainted with him, no, not ſo much as to have any ſerious thoughts about it, or to make any enquiry after him to inform your ſelf concerning him; yet you ſhall have him for your enemy whether you will or no. But O let us not part thus! let me, a man like thy ſelf, reaſon the caſe a little more with thee; come tell me, poor ignorant creature, thou that ſtill ſtandeſt demurring, and ſayſt, Shall I, ſhall I? what evil is there in thy *God*, that thou ſhouldeſt be thus hardly brought, ſo much as to diſcourſe this buſineſs with thy own ſoul? What is the reaſon that thou ſcarce thinkeſt it worth the while to trouble thy head about any thing that doth concern your intereſt in his love? Thou that mindeſt his love ſo little, tell me what doſt thou think had become of thee long before this, if God had regarded thee as little as thou doſt him? What wouldeſt thou have done, had the Lord ſaid to any Diſeaſe, the leaſt of his Meſſengers, fetch that Rebel before me, that values not my favour; he ſhall know what my anger is, ſeeing he will not prize my love. O what a lamentable caſe hadſt thou been in, had God but done by thee as thou haſt by him? *Acquaintance with God*! methinks ſinful man ſhould ſtand and wonder at ſuch a word; methinks he ſhould be even ſurprized with an extaſie of admiration; and ſay, and will *God* indeed be acquainted with ſuch

ſuch a Worm, ſuch a dead Dog, ſuch a Rebel as I? *Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him or the ſon of man that thou ſhouldeſt make ſuch an offer to him?* One would think thou ſhouldſt no more diſpute the matter then *Eſter* did, when that great Monarch made her his Queen. Were it but in ſenſible things, that nothing near ſuch an offer were made (which is impoſſible) man would think the very queſtioning in ſuch a caſe a ſtrange folly. One would think that every one of Gods enemies that have been in open Rebellion againſt him, and are utterly unable to make their part good againſt him, when they hear of ſuch tearms of mercy from their Prince, who hath all their lives in their hand, ſhould rejoyce at this news, and ſay, *How beautiful are the feet of them which bring ſuch tidings?* How did *Benhadad* look, when inſtead of a halter he had a Coach? When inſtead of Rebel, he heard Brother? Whatever we may think of theſe things, *David* thought it high time for him to bid ſuch a Meſſenger welcome, and to open his heart for the receiving his God: Hear what he ſaith to his own heart and others, *Pſal.* 24: *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlaſting doors, that the king of glory may come in.* And becauſe the door of mens hearts is lock'd and barr'd, and bolted, and men are in a deep ſleep, & will not hear the knocking that is at the gate, though it be loud, though it be a King: therefore *David* knocks again, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlaſting doors*: Why, what haſte, ſaith the ſinner? What haſte? Why, here's the King at your Gates; and that not an ordinary King neither, he is a glorious King that will honour you

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ſo far, if you open quickly, as to lodge within, to take up his abode in your houſe, to dwell with you; but the ſoul for all this doth not yet open, but ſtands ſtill queſtioning, as if it were an enemy, rather then a friend that ſtood there, and ask, who is the *King of glory*? Who? he anſwers again, *It is the Lord of hoſts*; he, that if you will not open quickly and thankfully, can eaſily pull your houſe down about your ears; He is the Lord of Hoſts, that King who hath a mighty Army always at his command, who ſtand ready for their Commiſſion, and then you ſhould ſoon know who it is you might have had for your friend; *Lift up therefore your heads, O ye gates*; open quickly, ye that had rather have God for your friend then for your enemy. O why ſhould not the ſoul every ſinner cry out, Lord, the Door is locked, and thou haſt the key, I have been trying what I can do, but the Wards are ſo ruſty that I cannot poſſibly turn the Key; but Lord, throw the Door off the Hinges, any thing in the world, ſo thou wilt but come in and dwell here: Come, O mighty God, break through Doors of Iron, and Bars of Braſs, and make way for thy ſelf by thy love and power. Come, Lord, and make thy ſelf welcome, all that I have is at thy ſervice: O fit my ſoul to entertain thee! But where is the ſinner that is in this note? How ſeldom do poor Creatures deſire Gods company, or bewail his abſence? Where almoſt are the men and women to be found, that do in good earneſt long to be acquainted with God? Men are naturally ſtrangers to God, and it is a wonderful difficult thing to perſwade men to enter into ſo much as a ſerious deliberate conſideration of

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these things. Though it be so infinitly for their interest; though the God that made them, out of pity to their souls desires it, though he send his Embassadors in his name to beseech them to be reconciled unto God, against whom they have been in open arms; though in infinite mercy he perswade them to lay down their weapons, and promise them Free and General Pardon, and to receive them into Favour, and to forget and forgive; yet where is the sinner almost to be found that with any thankfulness doth close with these tenders? Now it being a business of such infinite concernment, and it being the very work and business of a Minister of Christ to bring God and man into union, to get man acquainted with God, I shall in the next place labour to inforce this Exhortation upon the hearts of sinners, and do what I can possible to prevail with them that are as yet strangers, to get acquainted with God, that they may have peace, and that thereby good might come unto them.

EXHORTATION.

Once more, poor sinners, That God which can in a moment stop thy breath, and send thee into Hell, doth offer to be friends with thee. If thou wilt come upon his invitation, well and good, thou art a happy man for ever; if not, thou wilt rue the day that ever thou wert born: yet, through mercy the matter is not gone so far, but that thou mayest (if you will now at last in good earnest humble thy self to him) be received into favour. Behold, a Pardon, Mercy, and Grace! stand astonished, O ye Heavens, at this infinite con-

condeſcention, wonder O ye Angels, and pry into this kindneſs. Was there ever ſuch condeſcention, love, and goodneſs heard of? If thou didſt but underſtand, O ſtupid ſinner, what an offer is made to thee, thou couldeſt not but adore that goodneſs that can pardon and forget ſuch offences, and receive ſuch a Creature into favour; thou wouldeſt alſo cry out with as great admiration as he did; *what manner of love*! you would think it a mercy not to be paralell'd, a kindneſs never to be forgotten, a propoſal by no means to be refuſed. Now that I may, if poſſible, prevail with ſome that are yet afar off, to come near, I ſhall enforce this Exhortation with many powerful Motives, the leaſt of which (were men but well in their wits as to Spiritual matters, were the world not to a wonder fools, in the great affairs of their ſouls and eternity) might eaſily prevail. O that I might prevail! O that ſome might be perſwaded! O that God would put life and power into theſe words, that they might prove effectual to the intended ends! O that ſome poor rebellious ſinners might be made to cloſe with the moſt advantagious offers that ever were, or could be made to Creatures in our condition!

MOTIVES.

The firſt *Head* of *Motives* that I ſhall inſiſt upon to inforce this *Exhortation*, ſhall be taken from the nature of the Perſon that I would have you acquainted with. Conſider well what kind of friend you are like to have of him; and if, after you have well weighed what I ſhall (with Gods

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leave) say, you can find out any one in Heaven or in Earth that will be a better friend to you, and stand you in more stead; if in all the world you bring one that deserves better at your hands, and is more worthy of your choicest love, and acquaintance, if I bid you to your loss, why then let me bare the blame of a Cheater for ever. And if after trial, thorow trial, and intimate acquaintance, you find your self deceived, and that it was not worth the while to give your self so much trouble, why then let me be branded to Eternity for the veriest Lyar and Impostor in the world. For my part, I envy not men their happiness, but I wish with all my heart, that men would do that which may be most for their interest. It was the counsel of *Epictetus*, none of the weakest men, though a Heathen, *Make choice of that which is really most Excellent; and if there be a Friend to be found better then thy God, the first thing thou dost, get an interest in him.* But consider whether there be not a contradiction in the tearms, *Better then the best*; it's perfect nonsense. I know it's impossible for any one that hath right apprehensions of God to undervalue him. Wherefore it is a grand piece of Religion, to have clear apprehensions of God; such can't but believe him to be infinitely Lovely, Wise, and powerful, and to be obeyed in all things; and all the reason in the world to acquiesce in his will, who is so good and so wise; such will place happiness in nothing below his favour. Wherefore I think *Plutarch* was not mistaken, who affirmed, *That mans life was given him of god, only to get the knowledg of God.* But I shall be a little more particular in speaking to the excellent qualifications of him

him, whom I would fain get every poor ſinner acquainted with.

Firſt, He is the moſt loving and kind friend. Poor ignorant Creatures that are ſtrangers to him, they talk at a mad rate concerning him: thoſe that know him not will be ſpeaking bad, and thinking worſe of him; but, O did they but know what God is to them that are acquainted with him, had they but converſed with him themſelves, did they but ſee what entertainement he gives, had they but been in his company, and experienced what ſome have experienced, had they but beheld how affectionately he imbraces them which come to him; they would quickly ſay that it was a falſe report; and wicked ſcandal, that the Devil and the World, which know not God, had raiſed of him, they would ſoon cry out, that they would not for a world but that they had been at his houſe, and that they have cauſe to bleſs God for the day that ever they knew ſuch and ſuch who brought them acquainted with ſuch a friend; they will never while they live, for the future, believe any thing that is ſpoken againſt God or Chriſt, let who will ſpeak it. Is this the God they had ſuch hard thoughts of? Is this the kindneſs that they did ſo ſlight? Is this the friend that they were ſo loath to come to? And thus an ingenious ſoul will even be aſhamed that it ſhould ever harbour ſuch low thoughts of him, whom now to their comfort they have found beyond apprehenſion kind. Believe it Sirs, you can't conceive what a friend you ſhall have of God, would you but be perſwaded to enter into Covenant with him, to be his, wholly his; I tell you many, that

ſometimes think, and do as you do now, this is, ſet light by Chriſt and hate *God*, and ſaw no lovelineſs in him, are now quite of another mind, they would not for ten thouſand worlds quit their intereſt in him. O who dare ſay that he is a hard Maſter? Who that knows him, will ſay he is an unkind friend? O what do poor creatures ail that they do entertain ſuch harſh, ſowre thoughts of *God*? What, do you think there is nothing in that Scripture, *Pſal.* 31. 19. *O how great is thy goodneſs which thou haſt laid up for them that fear thee*! Doth the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeak too largely? Doth he ſay more than he and others could prove? Ask him, and he will tell you in *verſ.* 21. that he bleſſeth *God* theſe were things he could ſpeak to, from his own perſonal experience, and many thouſands as well as he, to whom the Lord hath ſhewed his marvellous kindneſs; and therefore he doth very paſſionately plead with the people of *God* to love him, and more highly to expreſs their ſenſe of his goodneſs, that the world might be encouraged alſo to have good thoughts of him. VVhat Nation under Heaven can ſay they have not taſted of his goodneſs, *Pſal.* 33. 5. *All the earth is full of the goodneſs of the Lord*. Read over the hundred forty fifth *Pſalm*, and let us hear then what you have to ſay againſt *God*. Some indeed may ſpeak of the might of *Gods* terrible acts; ſome that have deſpiſed his love, have felt his power and juſtice; as for theſe we cannot think them competent Judges, in this caſe; they will not, it may be, commend *Gods* goodneſs: yet even they cannot, will not condemn *God* of injuſtice, but exclaim againſt themſelves for their unſpeakable folly in slighting

ing his kindneſs when it was tendered to them. But as for others, ask them, and they will declare the goodneſs of God, they will abundantly utter the memory of his great goodneſs, and ſing of his righteouſneſs. Do but try poor ſinner, do but try, come a little nearer, and believe your own experience; and if after a thorow knowledge of God, and a real acquaintance with him, you can ſay that his favour is not to be ſought after, his love not worth the deſiring; why then I have done, I have no more to ſay. I am ſure, if God were, as the Devil and the world repreſent him to be; in ſo many thouſand of years, among ſo many thouſands and millions that have been acquainted with him, and entertained by him, ſome of them would have complained before this, we ſhould at one time or other have heard ſomething againſt him. Now I challenge all the world to produce me but an experienced ſolid Saint, that when he acted like himſelf, and after he had been in the company of God, and had been feaſted by him, could ſay that he kept a ſhort houſe, eſpecially could we but enquire of thoſe that ſit down at his Table, and are always in his preſence; which of them all have a word to ſay againſt him? but of that more hereafter. No, no it is in ſinners themſelves, there lies the fault; they believe the malicious father of lyes, they eaſily credit the unexperienced ignorant world: and how little reaſon you have to believe ſo malicious enemies before the Word of Truth, I leave your ſelves to determine. O why will you take up a ſlander againſt your Creator ſo eaſily? Why will you receive ſuch great things wherein your eternal welfare is con-

concerned upon truſt? Do but ſearch diligently, turn over the Bible, conſult the experiences of wiſer men, and ſee whether things be not as I tell you. And how doth the matter ſtand now, poor heart? what muſt the Devil be believed before God? what is God a hard maſter ſtill? of all the Creatures in the world, ſome of you have little reaſon to ſay ſo. Haſt thou not been fed, cloathed and delivered a thouſand times by him? Who is it that provided ſo richly for you? Who filled your barns? Who reſtored your health at ſuch & ſuch a time, when the Doctor gave you over? Was that one of his unkindneſſes? Are theſe the things for which you ſlight him? God himſelf makes a challenge in *Jer.* 25. *What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, & have walked after vanity, and become vain? neither ſaid they where is the God that brought us out of the land of Egypt, and led us through the wilderneſs, through a land of deſert and pits, through a land of drought and of the ſhadow of death, where no man dwelt: and I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof, & the goodneſs thereof, and yet you know not me, ſaith the Lord.* Was there ever ſuch ingratitude heard of? *Paſs ye over the Iſles of Chittim, and ſend unto Kedar, and conſider diligently, and ſee if there be ſuch a thing: hath a nation changed their god? but my people hath changed their glory for that which doth not profit,* And what ſayſt thou, O ungrateful *Iſrael*? have the Heathens more reaſon to cleave to their idols? Are the Pagans more beholding to their ſtocks and ſtones than thou art to the living God? And now what haſt thou got by all this? haſt thou increaſed thy riches? Are thy barns more full of Corn? Are there ever

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the more Cattel in thy Paſtures? Are thy Preſſes more full of Grapes? Art thou not now grown poor? Is not the Heaven become as Braſs, and the Earth as Iron? Do not thy Cattel groan for want of food? Are not thy Vines and Fields grown barren? Why, you may thank your ſelves for all this; you did not know vvhen you vvere vvell. Return therefore, O backſliding *Iſrael*, and thou ſhalt know the difference between my ſervice, and the ſervice of Devils, *Jer.* 2. 30, 31. Let me therefore again plead with thee O God-deſpiſing ſinner. If for all this thou vvilt not be perſwaded, let me expoſtulate the caſe with thee, as God did vvith *Iſrael*. Did not God bring thee into a vvorld every vvay furniſhed for thy uſe? Hath he not ſubjected the Creatures of the world to thee? Who vvaters thy Fields out of his treaſuries? Who opens the clods of the Earth, and ſends thee out of his ſtore-houſe proviſions year by year? What vvould quickly become of thee, if thou hadſt not a freſh ſupply from him every year, nay, every moment? O, is this his unkindneſs for vvhich thou hateſt him? And is it for this that thou haſt ſuch ſower thoughts of him? And if all this were too little, he vvould do greater things than theſe; hath he not ſent his Son out of his boſom? Doth he not offer thee Heaven and Glory? What canſt thou in reaſon ask, that is good for thee, that he vvould deny thee, if thou vvould but be acquainted with him? And if this be an unkind friend, I do not know who is kind: if this be not love, I know not vvhat is. What could he have done more to expreſs his love to the vvorld than he hath done, *Iſa.* 44. Ask *David* vvhat he thinks of God,

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he was well acquainted with him, he dwelt in his houſe, and by his good will would he never out of his more immediate preſence, and company: enquire, I pray, what he found amiſs in him? That you may know his mind the better, he hath left it upon Record in more than one or two places, what a friend he hath had of God, *Pſal.* 16.6. *The lines are fallen to me in pleaſant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage.* VVhy, what is that you boaſt of ſo much, O *David*? have not others had Kingdoms as well as you? No, that's not the thing, a Crown is one of the leaſt Jewels in my Cabinet, *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup.* So in *Pſal.* 23. quite through. Nay, doth he not ſometimes come out and beckon to the poor beggarly ſtarved world, to come and eat their fill of the ſame diſh; *O taſte and ſee that the Lord is good*, Pſal. 34.8. If you will give any credit to his word, he will tell you, *No friend like to God*, Pſal. 73.25,26,27,28. *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in earth that I can deſire beſides thee. My fleſh and my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For, lo, they that are far from him ſhall periſh: Thou haſt deſtroyed all them that go a whoring from thee; but it is good for me to draw near to God.* Let others think, or do as they pleaſe, as for him he values *the light of Gods countenance above corn, & wine, & oyl*, *Pſal.* 4.6,7. 1 *Joh.* 3.1. *Cant.* 14. And what ſayſt thou now poor creature? Art thou ſtill of the ſame mind? Wilt thou have God for thy God and Friend, or no? Is he good and kind, or not? Is his favour worth the deſiring and ſeeking after? *Pſal.* 94. 8. *Underſtand O ye brutiſh among the People, and ye fools when will you be wiſe?*

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If God himſelf may not be believed, if *David* his ſervant may not be credited, hear what one of your brethren a Heathen I mean, ſaith in this caſe. I ſhall tranſlate his words into Engliſh; they are as follows: *The goodneſs and providence of God to man is ſo great, that if he were well in his wits, he would do nothing publickly or privately, but praiſe God, and ſpeak well of his name*, Ar. Epic. l. 1. c. 16. Doth it not become man, while he is plowing, and digging, and eating, &c. to be ſinging, *Great is that God that hath given us land to till, inſtruments to work with; great is that God who hath given us hands and feet, and other members, above all, that he hath given us an underſtanding ſoul?* And ſeeing moſt men are blind in theſe things, is it not fit that ſome that are more wiſe and able ſhould publickly praiſe God for all theſe things? and now I am a lame old man but partaker of Reaſon, God is to be praiſed by me, this is my work, and this I will do, and I will not leave this ſtation as long as I live; and I wiſh that all the world would joyn with me in ſinging a ſong of thankfulneſs to this good God. Hear what a teſtimony he gives of the goodneſs of God; Hark how he invites you to joyn in that ſweet conſort of ſinging praiſes to your Maker: hark at what a rate he talks, that never read a Bible, or heard of a Chriſt, or knew what this acquaintance with God that I am ſpeaking of, meant; how bravely doth he ſet out the goodneſs of God? What ſay you, will you yet be perſwaded to think well of God? Methinks I am loath to ſee my good maſter thus ſlighted and undervalued; methinks it grieves me to ſee thee too, ſo fooliſhly to refuſe ſuch an offer. I ſhall conclude what I have to ſay upon

this head, with another notable expreſſion of the ſame divine and God-admiring *Stoick*, *Idem c. 6. If men would ſtudy the nature of things, and had but grateful minds, they might ſee cauſe ſufficient to praiſe God from every creature in the world.* It is not therefore becauſe God hath no goodneſs or beauty in him, that men do no more earneſtly deſire acquaintance with him; but becauſe their eyes are ſhut, or they look upon him through a wrong perſpective. This is the firſt qualification of this Friend, which may commend his acquaintance to you, that he is the moſt loving and good Friend.

Secondly, He is a moſt comfortable Friend. It is a vulgar, and yet a dangerous errour, which the Devil would fain keep up the credit of, That a Religious life is a ſad, melancholy, penſive life; and that upon our acquaintance with God, we muſt bid an everlaſting farewel to joy, pleaſure, and comforts. And is it true, that a Chriſtians life is ſo uncomfortable a life? What then doth *David* mean to take his Harp ſo oft in his hand? What makes him ſo frequently to warble out thoſe melodious Notes? How ſeldom is his Viol out of tune? Why is he ſo oft ſinging and rejoycing? Read the laſt *Pſalms* at your leiſure, and then tell me whether that be the language of a ſad mournful melancholy man? Do you never hear him ſpeak of God his exceeding joy? Doth he not tell God plainly ſometimes, that he can ſcarce reliſh any thing but that which comes from his Table? Nothing elſe can comfort him. Hence it is in *Pſal.* 119. 76,77. that he puts up this earneſt requeſt to God; *Let I pray thee thy merciful kindneſs be for my comfort.*

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As for his part he could take comfort in nothing below that, and that was it that the Lord had graciouſly promiſed to feed his ſervant with, as long as he lived; whereupon he urges God with his promiſe, *According to thy word unto thy ſervant.* And that none might think this to be only Gods common kindneſs that he means, he adds, *Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live.* Gods common mercies would not ſerve his turn. that was a Diſh that the World fed upon as well as he; if he might not have theſe ſweet dainties, peculiar, ſpiritual, fatherly mercies, he could not live, he ſhould even pine away for hunger. Wherefore he ſaith a little after, *That his ſoul did even faint for Gods ſalvation.* And the ſoul that hath had a full meal here; O how is it raiſed? How doth it cry roaſt meat, *Cant.* 4. 1. *The King hath brought me into his chambers*; and what had you there? nay, that's more than the ſoul can expreſs; only this ſhe can ſay, *I he taſte of that mercy, ſhe hopes to keep in her mouth for ever; ſhe ſhall remember his love more than wine.* Nay, ſo comfortable a Friend is God, that thoſe who have an intereſt in him can rejoyce in ſuch times, vvhen others vvould be vveeping and vvringing their hands. Gods company is ſo refreſhing, that it turns a priſon into a palace; it brings joy and pleaſure into a dungeon. Stand forth O ye ſuffering Saints, and ſpeak your experiences? the world objects your ſtate to us a ſad ſtate, and they think you have good reaſon to accuſe God, and if any have any thing to ſay againſt the comfortableneſs of a religious life, and this friend, it is you. Well then, will you promiſe, O ſinners, to ſtand to the judgement of the greateſt ſufferers?

ſufferers. We will enquire of them that have been ſawn aſunder, tormented, roaſted for Gods ſake; look into that little *Book of Martyrs*, and you ſhall find as uncomfortable as their ſtate was, yet they would not accept of deliverance; none of them all that would open his mouth againſt this Friend for all this. What ſay you, O *Paul* and *Silas*, now your backs are raw, and your feet are in the ſtocks? their ſinging ſpeaks ſignificantly enough for them that they were not over ſad; and they are ſo buſie in crying *Hallelujahs*, that they can't attend to give an anſwer to ſo ſorry a queſtion. What ſay the *Martyrs* out of the Flames. Doth not their love burn as hot then as ever? Did ever any of them from *Abel* to the leaſt that ſuffered in Chriſts cauſe, ſay that God was an uncomfortable Friend? Do not all the children of *Wiſdom*, from firſt to laſt juſtifie *Wiſdom*, and ſay, *That all her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths, peace*? Of thoſe that have God for their Friend and know it, bring me any of them all that complains of God. How doth he come and chear them up when all the world is againſt them? *Joh.* 16. 33. What made that Holy Man in *Pſal.* 23. ſay, *That though he ſhould walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, he would fear no evil.* What, not fear then? Why, what Friend is it that keeps up your ſpirits? that bears you company in that black and diſmal Region; he will ſoon tell you God was with him, and in thoſe ſlippery ways he lean'd upon his ſtaff, and theſe were the Cordials that kept his heart from fainting. I challenge all the Gallants in the world out of all their Merry Jovial Clubs, to find ſuch a company of merry chearful

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Creatures as the friends of God are. 'Tis not the company of God, but the want of it that makes ſad. Alas, you know not what their comforts be; and ſtrangers intermeddle not with their joy. You think they can't be merry when their countenance is ſo grave, but they are ſure you can't be truly merry when you ſmile with a curſe upon your ſouls. They know that he ſpoke that ſentence who could not be miſtaken, *Prov.* 14.13. *Even in laughter the heart is ſorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heavineſs.* Then call your roaring, and your ſinging, and laughter mirth; but the Spirit of God calls it madneſs, *Eccl.* 2.2. When a carnal mans heart is ready to die within him, and with *Nabal* to become like a ſtone; how chearfully then can thoſe look that have God for their friend! Which of the valiant ones of the world can outface Death, look joyfully into Eternity? Which of them can hug a Faggot, embrace the Flames? This the Saint, can do, and more too; for he can look infinite Juſtice in the face with a chearful heart, he can hear of Hell with joy and thankfulneſs, he can think of the day of Judgment with great delight and comfort. I again challenge all the world to produce one out of all their merry Companies, one that can do all this; come muſter up all your jovial Blades together; call for your Harps and Viols, add what you will to make the conſort compleat; bring in your richeſt Wines; come lay your heads together, and ſtudy what may ſtill add to your comfort; well, is it done? Now come away ſinner, this night thy ſoul muſt appear before God. Well now, what ſay you man? What, doth your courage fail you? Now call for your merry

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Companions; and let them chear thy heart. Now call for a Cup, a Whore, never be daunted man; shall one of thy courage quail, that could make a mock at the threatnings of the Almighty *God*? what so boon and jolly but now, and now down in the mouth? Here's a sudden change indeed! Where's thy merry companions. I say again? all fled! Where are thy darling pleasures? have all forsaken thee? Why shouldest thou be dejected, there's a poor man in rags that's smiling? What, art thou quite bereft of all comfort? What's the matter man? What's the matter? There's a question with all my heart, to ask a man that must appear before a *God* to morrow morning. Well then, it seems your heart misgives you, what then did you mean to talk of joy and pleasures? are they all come to this? Why, there stands one that now hath his heart as full of comfort as ever it can hold; and the very thoughts of Eternity, vvhich do so daunt your soul, raise his; and vvould you know the reason? he knows he is going to his friend, nay his friend bears him company thorow that dirty Lane. Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is for *God* and the soul to dwell together in unity! This 'tis to have *God* for a friend. *O blessed is the soul that is in such a case; yea, blessed is the soul whose God is the Lord*, Psal. 144. 15. Psal. 69. 15, 16. 2 Cor. 1. 3. Joh. 14. 16. Isa. 51. 11, 12. Neh. 8. 10. Psal. 30. 5. Psal. 44. 4. Prov. 14. 10. Isa. 29. 19. Rom. 14. 17. 1 Pet. 1. 8. Nay, *David* when he seem'd to be somewhat out of tune, leaves this upon Record as undoubted truth, *Psal.* 73. 1. *That God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart*; Let the Devil and his

his Inſtruments ſay what they will to the contrary, I will never believe them; I have ſaid it before, and I ſee no reaſon to reverſe my ſentence; Truly God is good. Though ſometimes he may hide his face for a while, yet he doth that in faithfulneſs, and love; there is kindneſs in his very ſcourges, and love bound up in his rods; he is good to *Iſrael*: do but mark it firſt or laſt, *The true Iſraelite in whom there is no guile, ſhall be refreſhed by this Sauiour.* The *Iſraelite* that wreſtles with tears with God, and values his love above the whole world, that will not be put off without his Fathers bleſſing, he ſhall have it with a witneſs; *He ſhall reap in joy, though he may at preſent ſow in tears. Even to ſuch as are of a clean heart.* The falſe-hearted hypocrite indeed that gives God only his tongue and lip, cap and knee, but reſerves his heart and love for ſin and the world, that hath much of complement, but nothing of affection and reality; why, let ſuch a one never expect, while in ſuch a ſtate, to taſte thoſe reviving comforts that I have been treating of: while he drives ſuch a trade, he muſt not expect much of Gods company; but of that hereafter. VVhat a charge doth God give to his Miniſters to keep up the ſpirits of his people. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,* ſaith their God, *ſpeak ye comfortably to Jeruſalem.* It's a groſs miſtake, to think that God loves to ſee his, drooping and hanging down their heads; no, no, he counts it his honour to have his ſervants chearful. O why then ſhould any of the precious ſons and daughters of *Zion* walk up and down, as if their friends company were not ſufficient to ſolace them, even in the loweſt ſtate that a child of

God

God can be conceived to be in. While you think God is honoured by you, you can't imagine what wrong you do him. The world ſtands by and looks upon you, the Devil bids them look on ſtill, and ask them, how they like ſuch a dumpiſh life, and the ſervice of ſuch a Maſter, all whoſe ſervants and friends lead ſuch a doleful life. Stay, hold there Satan, that's a lye, and a loud one too; there are and have been thouſands of Gods Children that have lived, as it were in the Suburbs of Heaven, while they have been upon Earth; many thouſands there have been, that have ſpent their days in true ſolid joy and peace; many that have gone from one Heaven of comfort here, to another of glory and comfort in that other world. As I ſaid before, ſo I ſay again, It is not the company of God, but the want of it, makes thoſe ſad which you ſee ſo; beſides, let me tell you, tears and joy are no way inconſiſtent. It may be alſo thoſe tears, that ſad countenance may be for thy ſake; when he ſees what comfort thou deſpiſeſt, and knows what a God, what a Friend thou refuſeſt, he can't but weep; it's no rarity for the people of God in the midſt of their ſpiritual enjoyments to pity poor fooliſh ſinners, that ſlight thoſe things which they know to be ſo refreſhing: Thus *David* did when his heart was ſolaced with the love of God, when his ſoul was ready to be over-burdened, over-powered with the abundant incomes of Gods kindneſs, he can't but with grief and pity think of their ſtate, who have nothing to live upon but huſks, whileſt he feeds thus high. O let my ſoul be but acquainted with God, let me but taſte more of thoſe true comforts, drink of that

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river of pleaſures that is at his right hand, and then I could ſpare theſe lower ſenſual pleaſures, then I ſhould ſcarce envy the moſt merry ranting Blades their comforts; I will not ſay but then I ſhould with ſorrow think of their wants. It was ſpoken by *Galeacius Caraxiola*, one that ſometimes had none of the leaſt ſhares of worldly enjoyments, and might have had more, could he have diſpenſed with the abſence of this friend, could he but have been willing to have wanted thoſe ſpiritual comforts. *Let him periſh that values not one hours communion with God, and the comforts of a divine life, above all the pleaſures and comforts that the earth can afford.* Give me ſuch comforts, ſuch a friend, whoſe ſmiles may refreſh me upon a death-bed, whoſe preſence may revive me when nothing elſe can. *Naturaliſts* tell us of a Bird call'd *Charadius* that being brought into the room where any one lieth ſick, if he look upon the ſick perſon with a fixed eye, he recovereth, but if he turn away his eyes, the perſon dies. It is true, I am ſure, of this friend, in whoſe favour is life, and in whoſe frowns there is death. [*Ar. Epic. l.3.cap.24.*] *Can you help me to ſuch a friend* (may all ſay with as good reaſon as he) *that can keep me from all fears.* O for ſuch a friend! This is inſtead of all pleaſures to me, to think that God is my Father, and to know that I have loved and obeyed him to the utmoſt of my power, not only in words but in deeds; this, this is the pleaſure, here's a friend indeed. Now what do you ſay to all this, is God to be deſired? Is his acquaintance to be ſought after? Can ſuch a friend be too much valued? The truth of it is, I would not give a ruſh for any of your comforts which come

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not from a ſenſe of our intereſt in Chriſt, and which have not a ſolid foundation, Scripture-conſolations. It is not he that ſmiles, but he that can look up to God as his, and look into his ſoul, and ſee things there in a good compoſure, and kept in a chearful ſubjection to his maker and Redeemer; this, this is the ſtate, here dwells joys, and comforts that deſerve ſuch a name. This lower Region ſometimes is ſtormy, but above there is a conſtant calm. *Sen.* And is God ſtill to be ſlighted? are his favours, is his acquaintance little worth? I know you can't be an enemy to comfort and joys; why, let me tell you here's the Well of Conſolation, here's the Fountain, and all other joys which are drawn out of the Ciſterns will ere long be dry. Come away therefore, poor ſoul, and do not refuſe ſuch joys as all the carnal world can't parallel for their hearts. And this is the next *Motive*, taken from the conſideration of the Nature of this Friend, which I would perſwade you to get acquainted with.

Firſt, He is a loving and kind Friend.

Secondly, He is the moſt chearing, comforting Friend.

Thirdly, He is the moſt able and powerful Friend. He hath all power in his hand; and as long as he is but thy Friend, who ere is thy Foe, thou ſhalt never be overpowred, never be cruſhed. Thou mayſt challenge all the Devils in Hell, and all his inſtruments upon earth to do their worſt, God is on thy ſide, thou needſt not fear. Thou art in thy ſelf a poor weak Creature, eaſily conquered and broken by a thouſand enemies; but if thou haſt a God to fly to, thou alſo mayeſt

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ſing as well as thoſe did, Iſa. 26. 1. *Thou haſt a ſtrong City, ſalvation will God appoint for Walls and Bulwarks.* No wonder then, if every wiſe man think it abundantly worth his while to ſecure this great Priviledg to himſelf that God may be his friend; This is his beſt hold, his *One thing neceſſary*, verſe 4. One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after; that I may dwell in the houſe of God all the dayes of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his Temple.

Sin, the World, and the Devil, may tempt a ſinner, but they can never guard him from the power of this Great and Almighty God.

And now, you that are contented to live as without God in the world, let me requeſt you to conſider:

Canſt thou ſpread out the Heavens as a curtain, or cover the Sun with darkneſs? Canſt thou call to the Lightnings, and will they anſwer thee, and ſay, here we are? Shouldſt thou ſpeak to that haſty Champion, and command him to ſtand ſtill one quarter of an hour, would he obey thee? If theſe things be too much, why doſt thou boaſt, that art but a worm? Alas poor ſinner, when this great God appears in judgment, thou art not able to deal with a Fly or a Frog.

O then, Is it not good prudence for all the ſons of men, to come and agree quickly with this Adverſary while he is in the way, for *whoever* goes on in an Enmity and Rebellion againſt this Lord of Heaven and Earth, ſhall not proſper, but be ſure his ſin ſhall find him out.

And this is another qualification of this Friend which I would commend to your acquaintance, he is an able Friend.

First, he is the moſt kind and loving Friend.
Secondly, he is the moſt comfortable Friend.
Thirdly, he is the moſt able and powerful Friend.

Fourthly, he is the moſt active Friend: He commands his to be diligent and induſtrious, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord, ſurely he will not be ſlow.

If the inanimate creature, ſuch as the Sun, reſolveth as a ſtrong man to run his Race; how active then muſt the maker of that Sun be; if he command you not to deal with a ſlack hand, ſurely he himſelf will not deal with a ſlack hand, ſhould you behold this friend of yours riding upon the wings of the Wind, and making the clouds his Chariot, would you not ſay, O how ſwift, O how active is this glorious friend of mine! the feet of this beloved One are as Hinds feet, for the good of his friends. Yea, *his very eyes run to and fro through the whole world*; for their good he keeps conſtant watch and ward about them, and he that can injure any of his out of his ſight ſhall go unpuniſhed, *Eſa.* 27.3.

The Lord ſpeaks this under the Metaphor of a *Vine-Yard*, and doth this great Husbandman neglect his *Vineyard*? doth he not Dig, Manure, and ſtone it, and keep out the *wilde* Boar, and Foxes? Doth he not prune it, and tender it charily? I the Lord do keep it night and day, none ſhall come into it to gather the Fruit of it without my leave. I will water it every moment: So that you ſee what pains God takes for his. Do you believe, this friend ſits in Heaven, and looks down upon the Earth for nothing? Be not deceived, O ſinner, that wilt not be perſwaded to

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get reconciliation with this Great and Holy Majesty. *The Lord is not slack concerning his coming, as some account slackness*: Let his stay be never so long, when he comes to judg the world, it will be before the sinner looks for him. Indeed there is nothing that a *wicked man* more pleaseth himself with, than the thoughts that it will be a long time before *God* and he meet, but he little considers that *a Thousand years are but as One day* compared to the dayes of Eternity. Now, by faith, these things are made real to the considerate Christian; and as for the supplying of his wants, he knows if he comes at midnight to borrow bread of him, he will not put you off with this excuse, that he is a Bed and cannot rise from his Children, but will present help, makeing, their necessity his own opportunity to give them what shall be convenient for them, as knowing, that let the wind sit in what corner it will, it shall fit their Sails, and bring them nearer the Harbour.

The worlds friends, are infinitely below this Friend; One hath chosen Silver and Gold, and a great Estate, and such a one in the worlds Kalender may be writ down for one of the wisest in his Choice: Well, let us see now what this friend can do for you, your body is on the Rack, your hands are weak, your legs tremble, your stomach fails, your sleep departs from you; Where is now your friend? call for him speedily, come let us now see if he be a friend indeed, let us see it, can he give you one hours sleep, can he help you to one moments rest, can he give you no refreshment, no help? Take him, lay him by you on your Bed. O its so heavy I cannot endure it: lay it in

your bosome, O, I cannot breath for it; take it away, take it away, it will not do; why Sir, do you know what you say? It is your old friend which you valued above God himself; it is a bag of gold; I know it, I know it, it presses me down; it is so heavy I cannot bear it, away with it, away with it; And is this the friend you prized so very highly? Is this all the kindness that he hath for you now? is this all the help he can give you at such a time when a friend should stand one in some stead? Were you not told as much long ago, how you should be served at last?

Fifthly, He is the most Humble and Condescending Friend, he doth not scorn to be acquainted with the meanest; the Beggar may be as welcome to him as the Prince: The Poor and Rich are all one to Him, he takes as much notice of *Job* on the Dunghill, as *David* on the Throne: He knows any of his Friends in Raggs, as well as in Silks; in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, as well as in Scarlet and fine Linnen.

Look up poor Creature, and see what a Priviledg thou hast, God himself the King of Glory is willing to be acquainted with thee; what sayest thou to this? Doth not thy Heart leap within *thee for joy, when you consider the* infinite Goodness of God, *that Reveals* these things to *Babes, which are hid from the Wise and Prudent: Even so Father, for it hath seem'd good in thy Eyes.* That's a strong Expression; yet he spoke it that cannot Lie: Therefore, O you Humble Ones, that value the Favour of this Friend, Hear and Read it, and make the Best of it: It's Yours; feed upon it: Its a

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ſweet bit indeed, *Iſ.* 66. 1, 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Heaven is my Throne, and Earth is my foot-ſtool; where is the houſe that ye will build me, and where is the place of my Reſt? for all theſe things hath mine hand made, and all thoſe things have been, ſaith the Lord: But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my word.* I ſhall have occaſion hereafter, a little to open theſe words under another *Head*, wherefore I ſhall now but name it. O what encouragement is here for the moſt deſpicable Creature in the world, that may be as happy in the acquaintance with God, as the mighteſt Lord in the World. Here's one that will not be aſhamed to own thee, when others will take little notice of thee. Thou thinkeſt theſe things ſtrang, it may be, and ſo they be indeed, but yet not more ſtrang than true. It doth not a little engage the affections of the meaner Rank, if a perſon of quality do but give them a kind look; eſpecially if they may have freedom of acceſs to him. O what a privileg they count it; but ſuch a one, to undertake the whole managing of a poor mans affairs, for him to come to his houſe, and to look into his Cuboard, and to take care of ſupplying all his wants, and coming frequently to him, and ſupping with him, and he with him, and to make great proviſion for him as if he were a Prince; where is ſuch a thing as this heard of? but if ſuch a thing were, it were a light matter in compariſon of what I am ſpeaking? VVhere do we ever read of a great Kings ſending Embaſſador after Embaſſador to a poor beggar? VVhat hiſtory doth Record ſuch a Story as this, that a great Monarch ſhould make earneſt ſute for many

years together to a worthless slave, that he can hang when he will, that hath not a rag to her back, to make her his Queen; this is rare indeed, this is beyond president among men; but yet it is that which the great God doth not disdain to do; Nay let me tell thee whosoever thou art remaining in a state of Nature, that readest these lines, that at this very time God is doing no less then all this comes to for thee; and I in the name of my great Master do come to expostulate the case with thee; that God that gave thee thy breath, and can take it away as soon as he pleaseth; that God that made heaven and earth, to whom all the Nations of the earth are but as the drop of a bucket to the vast Ocean, who holdest the Sea in the hollow of his hands, that weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hils in a ballance: that God that hath no less than a heaven to reward with, and a Hell and everlasting Flames to punish with, he it is, that doth by me beseech thee to be reconciled unto him, he it is that would be your Friend, your Acquaintance. O unheard of mercy! O infinite and unparall'd condescention! I have oft thought there are two great astonishing wonders in the world, The one is Gods infinite mercy and condescention to rebellious apostatized man; and the other is mans insensibility and ingratitude; that there needs such a stir, and so many words to perswade him to close with this wonder of kindness, and that so very few should be prevailed with. See this set forth to the life in *Ezek.* 16. *Isa.* 1. 2,3. *Psal.* 11. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. *The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the Heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth him-*

himself : Behold the things that are in Heaven, and the things that are in the Earth : He raiſeth up the poor out of the Duſt, and lifted the needy out of the Dung-hil, that he may ſit with Princes, &c. The *Pſalmiſt* therefore had no ſmall reaſon to cry out with admiration, Pſal. 8. 4. *What is man that thou art mindful of him; and the ſon of man, that thou viſiteſt him ? What is man that thou takeſt knowledg of him, or the ſon of man, that thou makeſt account of him ?* Pſal. 144. 3. Job. 17. 17, 18. *What is man that thou ſhouldeſt magnifie him, and that thou ſhouldeſt ſet thy heart upon him, and that thou ſhouldeſt viſit him every Morning, and try him every moment ?* Behold his Majeſty, and yet how he ſtoops ? Nahum 1. 4. Pſal. 18. Job 37, 38. and 39. Chapters, Iſa. 40. Pſal. 138. 6. *Though the Lord be high, yet hath he reſpect unto the lowly : But the proud he knows afar off.* That which (*Seneca, Epiſt.* 17.) the Moraliſt ſpeaks of Wiſdom may be ſaid of God, *Epiſt.* 61. *It is lawful to come to him without rich Attire and great attendance, come naked and you ſhall be as kindly entertained, as if you did ſhine in cloth of Gold, and were beſparkled with Diamonds. He will not give freer acceſs to the rich than the poor, neither doth he value a ſtrong healthful perſon, before a ſick and crazy one, a beautiful and well-trim'd Gallant, before a cankered, old, deformed Creature.* Thus far *Seneca* and the Scripture ſpeaks of the Language. Neither *Job's* Boyls, nor *Lazarus's* ſores made God keep ever the further off from them. I knew one all of a cleave with the ſmall Pox, whom this friend came to viſit, and in that condition, how many kiſſes, had that ſweet Creature from God ? O it would do ones heart good to have ſuch a friend ! And this

is the next qualification of this Friend, which may commend him to thy acquaintance, be thou never ſo poor, never ſo vile and ſinful in thy own eyes, ſuch as thy ſelf he hath made welcome; and upon his Word, wilt thou but come away ſpeedily, thou ſhalt be welcome too.

Sixthly, He is the moſt Faithful friend. Where is the man that can tax him in the leaſt unfaithfulneſs? which is the man that can ſay that he ever forſook any of his in their greateſt exigency? he hath been truſted more than once with more than the world is worth a thouſand times over; and they which truſted him moſt, never accuſeth, never thought their choiſeſt Jewels, their whole eſtate could be left in ſafer hands; his promiſe, and his performance have kept touch, he never failed his in the leaſt punctilio, or circumſtance of time. Ask *Abraham*, who was one of Gods friends, God tells him that his ſeed ſhall inherit *Canaan*, and that they ſhall be ſtrangers in a Land that was not theirs four hundred years; and did he not at the expiring of that time, though it was at midnight almoſt, bring them out of *Egypt*: God keeps his time with them to a minute. Ask *Joſhua* whether he did not live to ſee this promiſe made good? inquire of *David*, and he will tell you again, that no friend is ſo truſty. The unfaithfulneſs is on mans ſide there indeed, there I ſay is many an unhandſome thing done, and yet for all God doth not (as you ſhall here hereafter) preſently break with them; if they forget that they are Children, he will not forget that he is their Father; if God ſhould have done thus by them, many thouſands of them that are now in Glory had been ſomewhere elſe. He promiſeth indeed great

great things unto his Friend; but do's he not do as he ſaith, if not in the very thing, yet in that which is better; and who would account himſelf wronged; if one that promiſed him ten pound in ſilver, ſhould in the ſtead of it give him ten thouſand Pound in Gold and Jewels; I believe ſuch a one would not be thought to be worſe than his word, nor the perſon to whom he made this promiſe, count himſelf injured. And this God doth frequently, did men but underſtand the worth of what God pays them with. It may be God doth not cloath them in Silks and Sattins, (neither do I know that he ever promiſed to do ſo) but yet he cloaths them with the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and beſtows thoſe glorious Robes upon them, in which they look more Trim and Neat then in Cloaths of Gold; he hath made him ſuch a Suit that is the handſomer for the much wearing; he may Eat and Drink, ſleep, and work in it, and keep it on his Back Day and Night, and it ſhall not be wrinkled; it is the better for uſe: He is a faithful Friend, and none that ever had to do with him can ſay any thing to the contrary; he never forgot any buſineſs that any of his Friends deſired him to do for them, he never neglected it, or did it by the halves; where did any of them come to him to reveal ſome ſecret loathſome diſtemper to him, that he reproached them with it? To which of them did he promiſe a Heaven, and put them off with this World: when this Pilot undertakes to ſteer their courſe, there their veſſel ſhall never ſplit upon the Rock, run upon the ſands, or ſpring a Leak, ſo as to ſink in the Seas; to be ſure he will ſee them ſafe in the harbour. *Ar. Epiſt. l. c.* 26. He was no Chriſtian, yet I ſuppoſe none will

deny but he ſpake good Divinity, who ſaid; *If a man will chooſe God for his Friend, he ſhall travel ſecurely through a Wilderneſs that hath many Beaſts of prey in it, he ſhall paſs ſafely through this World, for he only is ſafe that hath God for his guide.* Doth he not ſpeak a little like *David* himſelf, *Pſal.* 37. 26. VVho never expected to come to glory, except he were guided by his Council! Now if a poor Heathen could ſay thus, and ſee good reaſon to truſt God, and admire his Faithfulneſs as he doth frequently; and ſo doth *Seneca*, juſtifying Gods Faithfulneſs in all his dealings with the beſt men in all their ſufferings, and the proſperity of the wicked; what then ſhall the heavenly Chriſtian ſay, who hath experienced ſo much of Gods faithfulneſs in anſwering his Prayers, in fulfilling his promiſes, and ſupplying all his exigencies. *David* will tell you as much, and juſtifie God in his moſt ſevere diſpenſations towards him: *In very Faithfulneſs haſt thou afflicted me, Pſal.* 119. 75 In our earthly and bodily affairs, we ſhould never count that Phyſitian faithful that will rather open a vein, or put his Patient to exquiſite torture to ſave his life, than let him die eaſily. We believe a Father may whip his ſtubborn Child with more love than let him alone. To prevent the Ax or Halter with a Rod, is no cruelty. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, *Prov.* 2. 7, 6. It was not for nothing that the Pſalmiſt ſticks ſo cloſe to God, he had a litle experience of the unfaithfulneſs of other friends, *Pſal.* 38. 9, 11. *His Lovers and his Friends ſtood aloof from his ſore, and his Kinſmen ſtood afar off.* May not a great many complain as well as *Job*, *That their Brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the ſtream of Brocks they paſs away*

away, Job 6. 15. A friend may forget one, a brother may diſown one, father and mother may caſt one off, but here's a friend that ſticks cloſer than all. Nay, he is a better friend to his then they are to themſelves; when they love themſelves ſo little as to undo themſelves, he loved them ſo well as to ſave them; when they loved themſelves, ſo as to poiſon themſelves; he loved them, ſo as to give them a powerful Antidote; when they like Children would have the knife, he takes it out of their hands leſt they ſhould cut their fingers; when they are ſo careleſs as to ſurfit themſelves, he is ſo faithful as to keep them ſhort, and diet them; and all this I hope they that underſtand themſelves will not call unkindneſs or infidelity. *David* had in his time ſome friends that made no bones of hazarding their lives for him; ſome of them were willing to quench his Thirſt though with their Blood, and yet for all that in all his life he never met with ſo faithful a friend as his God, *Pſal.* 89. 8. *O Lord God of Hoſts, who is a ſtrong God like unto thee, or to thy faithfulneſs round about thee?* He had rather truſt his God than any of them all. God is a real true faithful Friend; he tells us things as they be; he doth not ſpeak of more things than the nature of them doth require; he doth not tell the beſt, and hide the worſt; he doth not ſpeak all of Heaven, & nothing of ſuffering, but ſaith plainly, all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, they muſt ſuffer perſecution: and Chriſt ſaith, Thoſe that will be his Diſciples, muſt take up their Cr ſs and follow him, and that through many tribulations, they muſt enter into the kingdom of heaven. He ſpeaks of ſowing in Tears, as well as reaping in joy; of

fliction as well as Glory. And when he ſpeaks of the glory of another world, he doth not too highly advance his Excellency. VVhen he ſpeaks of his VVrath, or Hell or Sin, he doth not make them greater evils then they be. The Lord is faithful in all his dealings, and that they which love him, know right well. VVhatſoever doth happen to the world doth happen juſtly and faithfully; and ſo if thou wilt but obſerve, thou ſhalt find. And what ſaieſt thou after all this, thou who haſt tryed many and many a friend, ſo called, and haſt by ſad experience firſt or laſt found them all unfaithful, and art almoſt ready to ſay of all men, that they are Lyars, and that truth and reality are rarities; thou thinkeſt there is ſcarce a man upon the earth to be truſted? And wilt thou never be affraid of ſuch a friend? wilt thou at laſt be wiſe and be acquainted with a friend that never proved unfaithful? behold, ſuch a one that would be glad with all his heart to entertaine you, would you but forſake your old treacherous Acquaintance. Here, here's one that never fails, nor forſakes thoſe that put their truſt in him. The Heavens ſhall depart, & the Hils be removed out of their places, but his faithfulneſs, his love ſhall never depart from his; and wilt thou not think ſuch a friend after all this worth the having? Come, come, never ſtand fretting thy heart out with diſcontents, men will be men, that is, unfaithful as long as the world laſts. Do you expect as long as ſin reigns in mens ſouls, that as long as Satan doth ſo much act therein that they ſhould forget to be ſelfiſh, covetous, deceitful? but now God will always be like himſelf a God, faithful, true, holy, juſt? and if

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any one in Heaven, or in Earth can condemn God juſtly, of the leaſt unfaithfulneſs, my mouth ſhall ſoon he ſtopped. In this thing I confeſs my ſelf to be of *Antoninus* his mind, who ſaid, *That if there be a God as there is moſt certainly, why that God muſt neceſſarily be moſt faithful, moſt wiſe, moſt good; but if there be no God, it is not worth the while to live in a world, in which there is nothing but ſin, confuſion, diſorder, and no hopes of a redreſs; the excellence of our being, our Reaſon, would make our miſery more exquiſite, and our lives leſs deſirable.* But bleſſed be God it is not come to that paſs, that we ſhould need queſtion the being of a God; for as one ſaith wiſely, *Thou haſt far more reaſon to queſtion thy own being then Gods.* Now I ſay again, methinks he that hath been ſo oft perplexed with many unfaithful, unworthy carriages from them which he called friends, ſhould be at laſt perſwaded to try what this one friend would do for him. O what abundance of ſorrow would it prevent, if men would but truſt God more, and men leſs. This, this is the friend ſick and well, rich and poor, living and dying, always the ſame. Make ſure of this Friend, and thou art ſafe; thy All is then in ſafe and faithful hands.

Seventhly, He is a rich Friend, *the earth is the Lords, and the Fulneſs thereof; cattel upon a thouſand hills is his.* He it is that hath the abſolute diſpoſal of Crowns and Scepters, he it is that can eaſily raiſe all his Favourites to a high eſtate; if the world and all its glory can do his any good, if Kingdoms and vaſt Dominions can advantage them, he can with better reaſon than he did to Chriſt, ſay, All is mine, and if thou wilt love me and worſhip me, I will give you as much of

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it as will do thee good; and who would account it a kindneſs to be given that which will do one hurt? but theſe are but toys and trifles in compariſon of what God hath to beſtow upon his friends. Lift up thine eyes, and behold thoſe gliſtering Stars; look upon that ſtately Canopy that hangs over thy head; why, all this is nothing almoſt to the glory which ſhall be revealed; there is a far greater diſproportion between what we ſee and enjoy at the beſt here below, than there is between the footſtool and the Crown. O, could you but by Faith draw the Curtain and ſee what is within; O did you but know what's behind thoſe Hangings which you ſee wrote ſo curiouſly, the work of his Fingers! O that, that's the place, there's a houſe indeed, there's a Palace, could'ſt thou but by faith and meditation take a view of it; could you but make a voyage into that far Countrey, and ſee that City of God, and diſcourſe with the inhabitance of the *New Jeruſalem*; what diſcoveries ſhould you then have of the Riches, State, and Grandeur of that Princes Court; ſhould'ſt thou but ſee thoſe Treaſuries opened, and know the worth of Gods Jewels, thou would'ſt wonder what men and women meant, that they ſhould need ſo much perſwading to be acquainted with him that had ſuch things to beſtow; you would judg him worſe than mad, who ſhould not joyfully embrace any Overtures of this nature; in a word, they would reckon that perſon beſotted that ſhould not with all poſſible gratitude, cloſe with ſuch kind of propoſals. Come along therefore with me, poor ſoul, thou that art not worth a grout, and haſt never a friend that can or will give you any thing to ſpeak

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of, come along with me, and take a ſhort proſpect of the Territories of this mighty Monarch, let's get up to mount *Piſgah*, and make a ſurvey of that goodly land, let's take a turn or two in the Courts of his place; conſider well the pleaſantneſs of this ſeat, how rarely it is accommodated, the richneſs of the furniture, the nobleneſs of the inhabitants, the ſweetneſs of that Harmony that ſounds Night and Day in that Temple, the unconceivable Coſtlineſs, Riches, Glory, and excellency of every thing. Do but look a little about thee, are not thine eyes even dazelled at the ſight? do you ſee what building that is, whoſe walls are Jaſper, and the City is all of pure Gold, like unto clear Glaſs, and the foundation of the walls of that City are garniſhed with all manner of precious ſtones, *Rev.* 21 &c. And what think you now, where is the Prince upon earth that ever was maſter of ſuch an eſtate? what are his attendants? the meaneſt of thoſe that ſtand in his preſence, is no leſs than a King; the leaſt of his ſervants is more rich and glorious than the mightieſt Potentate that ever trode upon earthly Mold, that was a ſtranger to God. This God doth not grudg to give that which is more worth than a thouſand Kingdoms to his Darlings. I might tell alſo at what a rate they live, who are fed always at his Table, and what dainty diſhes they feed upon, I might ſpeak of their Cloathing and Robes, all which ſpeak the riches of that Lord which maintains his ſervants ſo highly. But what am I doing, *Can I Graſp the Heavens in my Arms? or take up the Sea in the hollow of my Hands? Can I meaſure the Heaven of Heavens, or weigh the Mountains in in ſcales, or the hills in a ballance?* Could I do all

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and a thouſand times more, yea could not give you an account of the Eſtate of him who would be your Friend, your husband: at the beſt, I can but give you a ſuperficial groſs relation of it, and when I have ſaid all that I can ſpeak of, and all the men in the world with all their Tongues have ſpoke what they can too, nay, let Angels with their Heavenly Rhetorick do what they can to ſet out the glory of his Kingdom; I ſay, when all this is done, you muſt remember all falls ſhort of what it is, and that ſince the beginning of the world men have not heard, neither can it enter into the heart of man, to conceive what God is worth, what a friend you may have of him, if you will but ſpeedily be acquainted with him. His Kingdom hath no bounds, and his Dominions reach further than both the *Indies*. The ſmall love-tokens that he ſends now and then to his Beloved into a far Countrey, are of infinitely more value than all the Lockets of Diamonds and richeſt Pearls and Jewels in the world, *Pro.* 8. Behold how merrily *Rebeccah* looks upon a ſorry Jewel or two preſented by *Eliezer* from his Maſter, how ſoon is her heart conquered? and why ſhould we not be more taken with things of far greater worth? What, is all this, as much as nothing with you? Methinks your hearts ſhould be all on a Fire; Methinks, you ſhould quickly ſay, O that I could but ſee him! who will bring me acquainted with him, he ſhall have my heart, my deareſt Love? Methinks, ſhould I ask you the ſame queſtion that they did *Rebeccah*, Wilt thou go a long with me to ſuch a Friend? You ſhould readily, without any further diſpute ſay, yea, with all my Heart, and think long to be up and

going

going. VVhy then do you talk of a year, a month longer? O what ail poor Creatures to make us ſtand waiting ſo long for an anſwer? Do you ever expect a better offer? Do you look to advance your ſelves ſomewhere elſe? Can you hope for a better, a richer match? Go thee and ſearch out among all thy Lovers which make ſuit to thee, which of them can feed thee with ſuch coſtly viands, which of them can cloath you in ſuch Royal Apparel? VVhich of them can make you ſuch a Joynture? Conſider wiſely and ſpeedily, that I may turn to the right hand or the left. VVhat, ſaith thou, canſt thou amongſt them all better thy ſelf? Is there any one like him? Is there any of the Sons of the mighty comparable to him? Are any of the Kings, or great ones of the Earth able to make you ſuch an offer, or ſhould they, can any of them make it good? VVhat, have you yet reſolved upon the point or not? VVhat it is you ſtand for, I pray do you queſtion the Truth of what I ſpeak? Do you make account I ſpeak of the higheſt, and make the beſt of things? VVhy, then let me tell you further, I have not, I cannot tell you the half of what you will find to be true, if you would come to be throughly reſolved, or of what you will believe hereafter, to your ſorrow if you ſtill refuſe him. An I I muſt further add to what I ſaid before, that whatever riches God poſſeſſes, he will joynture you in, as ſoon as you ſhall in good earneſt be willing to accept him for your Friend; all that I can ſpeak of, and more too, you may call your own. Ask, and it ſhall be given without preſcribing how much more than you can ask or think ſhall be given you. Your Lord and husband

husband is not ſo niggardly as *Ahaſhuerus*, who ſaid, *What is thy requeſt, and what is thy Petition, Queen Eſther, and it ſhall be given thee, to the half of my Kingdom?* But God ſaith what is thy requeſt, and what is thy petition poor ſoul, and it ſhall be granted to the whole of my Kingdom; what is it thou wanteſt, what attendants doſt thou lack to wait upon thee to my Court? are they Prophets, Apoſtles, Miniſters, Angels, they ſhall be given, 1 *Cor.* 3. 21. Do but try him; he bids you ask, and you ſhall have: Let me give you this one *Memento*, Ask like one that hath to do with a rich King, who hates to do any thing below himſelf; remember it is he that delights to give like a God; widen therefore thy deſires as large as Heaven, be bold and ſpeak a great word, and I warrant thee thou ſhalt not be denied; tell God, that ſeeing in his infinite goodneſs and condeſcention, he hath been pleaſed to give thee leave to ask without reſtraint, thou doſt humbly requeſt his Son for thy Lord and Husband, himſelf for thy Father, God, and Friend, his Kingdom for thy Dowry, the Righteouſneſs of his Son for thy Ornament, Cloathing, and Beauty, the comforts of his Spirit, and abundance of his grace to bear thy charges handſomly, till thou comeſt to his houſe. This is high indeed! but thy great and noble Lord loves dearly to hear ſuch covetous Petitioners, who will be put off with nothing but ſuch great things. When do any of theſe go ſad from his Court? when do any of the ſeed of *Jacob* ſeek his face in vain? This, this is the generation of thriving ones, who ſeek for life, immortality and glory; who ſeek thy face, O God of *Jacob*. And now what do you ſay,

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will you believe all this? Dare you take my word? I am perſwaded none of you all think I dare tell you a lye, and do you any wrong; but for all that, I do not deſire you ſhould take my word, nor the word of any man living in a thing that concerns Eternity; but take his word who cannot lye, *Pſal.* 8. 18. *Riches and Honour are with me; yea durable riches and righteouſneſs.* verſ. 19. *My fruit is better than Gold; yea, than fine Gold; and my Revenue than choice Silver.* The wiſe man tels us, *That wealth makes many friends,* Prov. 19. 4. *And that many will intreat the favour of the Prince; and that every one is a Friend to him that gives Gifts.* If this might be in Spirituals, I ſhould not fear, but that I ſhould prevail with all my hearers to ſeek the friendſhip of God; if their real intereſt did weigh with them, if true riches and wealth could win their affections, if the moſt ſubſtantial good things might ſignifie any thing, if ſolid reaſons might byaſs them, I ſhould not fear going away without them. But alas, alas, how litle power have all theſe things with the ſenſual world? What are men and women turn'd to? What ſots and bruits are they in the concerns of their ſouls, and the affairs of that other world? Men run up and down hunting after good things, and have taken a falſe ſeat, they hope to catch that at laſt which they will feed upon, and ſatisfie themſelves with. I tell thee, O man who askeſt, who will ſhew us any good? Here here it is; riches thou meaneſt: well then, let it be ſo; and if I do not prove that what I offer thee from my great Maſter, to be a thouſand times more worth thy ſeeking than Gold or Silver; and better Coin than that which bore *Ceſars*

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ſtamp upon it, then ſay you were cheated. Thou telleſt over thy moneys very faſt methinks, but are you ſure all that is Gold which doth ſo gliſter? Is all that currant Silver? Will it go in another Country? Is it not poſſible, but that you may be miſtaken. Here, here is the Gold that is tried, it will go any where; here is one that will give you, will you but deſire earneſtly his acquaintance, ſuch treaſure that will not periſh, ſuch ſilver that hath no tin, ſuch gold which hath no droſs, ſuch true riches can't be taken away from you. Ask that Saint which looks ſo merrily, that lives ſo bravely, how he got his eſtate, and how he came to be ſo Rich all of a ſudden; he will ſoon tell you how, and where his treaſure lies, and yet not fear being robbed. He hath of late been acquainted with a Friend that hath given him that which makes him eſteem himſelf more worth than if he were poſſeſt of ten times more than ever *Alexander* or *Ceſars* was. A Friend of *Cyrus* in *Xeniphon* being asked where his Treaſure was, which made him to think ſo highly of himſelf? His anſwer was, *Where* Cyrus *his Friend was.* A Chriſtian may with much better reaſon and chearfulneſs, if asked, where his Riches and Eſtate lies, anſwer, *Where God his Friend is.* Ask the pooreſt of them that are acquainted with God, the weakeſt of all his Children, what they will ſell their portion for, and what you ſhall give them for to reſign up all their intereſt in God, to quit their claim to this inheritance: Would they not all be of *Pauls* mind, and even ſcorn the motion, and count the glory of a thouſand worlds but as dung and droſs in compariſon of the excellency of the know-

knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus their Lord, *Phil.* 3. 8. Nay, hear what one ſays that was far leſs acquainted with *God* then any of them which I have been ſpeaking of, when he talks of ſuch a kind of bargain as this. (*Epict.*) *Offer me a Kingdom, and you offer me to my loſs.* For, ſaith the ſame Author in another place, *A good man may look up to Heaven, as the ſeat of his Friend, and not fear want.* Inquire of *David* what protion God gave him? and he will ſoon anſwer you. A goodly portion indeed; and that he gave him no leſs then himſelf, and that the lines are fallen to him in pleaſant places, and that he hath a goodly heritage, *Pſal.* 16. And therefore he counts himſelf richer then if he had all his Enemies in chains, and their Royalties at his diſpoſal; he takes himſelf to be a far happier man then if he were abſolute Monarch of the Univerſe, and were to give Laws to the inferiour World; he reckons himſelf now as well to paſs and better too then *Adam*, when he was ſole Landlord of the World. It was true ſpoken of ſome body, I do well remember who. *He that hath rich Friends, muſt not look upon himſelf as poor.* O then that you would be indeed friends to your ſelves, and have reſpect to your own real intereſts! And what, will not this mighty and powerful Argument, which weighs as much as a thouſand others, prevail? And do you ſtill ſay, what profit will there be in ſerving the Lord, and what advantage ſhall I get if I be acquainted with him? To what account will it return? I again anſwer, To a very good account every way. Try but this trade with the wiſe Merchant, & you ſhall ſoon feel the benefit of it. (*Bolton*) *Come unto thy ſelf mountains of Gold and rocks of Dia-*

monds;

monds; & to this a vaſt unmeaſurable tract of ground, land of inheritance, the moſt fertile ſoil in the world, bringing in ſuch a burden every year that ſhall trouble the owner to reap it; imagine his Paſture as great as his Arable, & all cloathed with thouſands of Cattel ſmall and great, and none of them barren neither; ſuppoſe his Barns and Store-houſes could never be emptied, and his Preſſes ſhould burſt out every year with new Wine. Again, *let the Merchant ſtore his Cellars with the moſt pure Oyl, and furniſh him with ſuch rich Spices as the Queen of* Sheba *brought to* Solomon; *ſuppoſe he were provided with all the exquiſite Rarities that the Air, Sea, or Earth can afford, yet for all this he were a beggar, in compariſon of one that hath God for his Friend: Such a one poſſeſſeth him that poſſeſſeth all things.* VVell then, be perſwaded at laſt to be wiſe. I remember the Moraliſt (*Sen. Epiſt.* 6.) brings in one acting like a wiſe man, and a good proficient in Philoſophy, who begins to be a friend to himſelf. And this is that that I am pleading with you for. If I came to rob you of all hopes of happineſs, and to give away all that you have or expect, and to turn Mendicants; if I came to perſwade you to eſpouſe a beggarly intereſt, and to match your ſelf ſo as that you ſhould be ſure to be undone, I ſhould not wonder, if after I had ſpoke much, I ſhould prevail but little. But when it is ſuch a Cauſe that I am pleading, when it is for your own unſpeakable advantage, when it is riches, true riches that I would have you look after, an eſtate that I would have you mind, which may be had for the looking after, have I not cauſe to admire what need a man ſhould have to uſe ſo many words? Had you money to ſpare, and could I tell you of a brave purchaſe

chaſe that you might have an excellent penny-worth, I am perſwaded I ſhould not be very unwelcome. Could I tell you of a vaſt Eſtate that you might have, upon the matter, for accepting or looking after, I believe I need not ſpend ten years in earneſt begging and intreating you to look after ſuch a thing. Should I offer to bring you to the place and perſon of whom you might buy it, ſhould I not ſoon have your company? ſhould not your neceſſaries be quickly made ready for ſuch a journey? would you not be up betimes in the morning? nay, would you not travel all night, and think it no folly nor madneſs, both to loſe ſome reſt, and to take ſome pains, ſo you might but come to poſſeſs what I ſpeak of. Nay, were there but a poſſibility of obtaining of it, at leaſt a probability, I perſwade my ſelf you would not fail to look after it the very firſt thing you did. I am ready to think you would neither ſpare for pains or coſts, ſo that after all you might but make ſure of enjoying it. Why, what then is the matter that I can do no more in the buſineſs that I am about? I am ſure I bring you tidings of a better bargain, a braver purchaſe, and ſurer inheritance, and what need I then ſpend ſo much time in arguing with you? Good Lord! what mean people? Are they out of their wits, and quite beſide thmſelves? What, is a Feather better then a Crown, Braſs than Gold? Is a Glaſs to be preferred before a Diamond, finite Enjoyments before evelaſting Riches, Darkneſs before Light, the World before God? O how is man ſunk below himſelf? What hath ſin made men and women? If this be not folly and madneſs, what is? Such may go for wiſe men in the worlds

account that makes ſuch choices; and it's poſſible a man in *Bedlam* may ſay his neighbour that tore all his hair off from his head, is well in his wits. O that this were not the condition of the far greater part of the world. And what meaneſt thou, O my ſoul, that thou art no more affected to ſee ſuch vaſt multitudes of brain-ſick frantick ſinners, that make light of the tender of the Goſpel, that take them for their enemies, who would do their utmoſt to make them happy for ever. I muſt profeſs I am even aſhamed of my own heart, that I do not mingle my words with tears; that I ſhould ſpeak for God and ſouls, with ſo indifferent a ſpirit! Well, now you have heard of a great match by which you may be made for ever; are you for all this of the ſame mind you were: Well then, complain not if you be a beggar. Remember how you were offered, remember you might have been worth more then a world. O that inconſiderate ſouls did but know; and indeed know what an offer this is! O that they would not careleſly undervalue ſuch a propoſal! O what ſhall I do? How ſhall I perſwade you? What Arguments will prevail? O thou great and mighty God, give men and women but a ſpiritual underſtanding of theſe things, make them deeply apprehenſive of their excellency and reality, and then I ſhould ſoon have them with thankfulneſs complying with theſe tenders which thou commandeſt me to make unto them. O when ſhall it once be! How long ſhall the Devil, and an unbelieving heart undo ſo many millions? How long ſhall Satan triumph over ſouls, and cheat them thus miſerably of their All? O pity, pity dear Lord,

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the beſotted fooliſh world, and give me more compaſſion to ſouls, that I may with incomparably greater earneſtneſs and tenderneſs plead thy cauſe with them, and reſolve to give them no reſt, till I have perſwaded ſome of them in good earneſt, to look after the great and weighty affairs of Eternity, and the making ſure of this Friend.

Eighthly, He is a ſympathizing Friend. It goes to his heart (with Reverence be it ſpoken) when any injuries are done to any of his; when his friends are wronged, it touches him to the quick: He is as tender of them, as of the apple of his eye. Again, *He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me.* Never was tender-hearted Mother more pitiful over her only Child, then God is to them which love him, never was any friend ſo much concerned for another as God for his. What elſe mean thoſe high expreſſions of pity in *Iſa.* 63. 6. *In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his preſence ſaved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* It was not once or twice that God did ſo by them; but in all their afflictions, he was afflicted; which was not expreſſed in ſome cold formal words, ſuch as theſe. Alas poor creatures, they are quite undone, their enemies are very barbarous, but he ſhew'd it in that muſt real demonſtration, by ſaving of them by the Angel of his preſence. A verbal kindneſs coſts little, and helps little. But ſuppoſe his friends are carried Captive, are they not quite out of the reach of his help? No, his love, pity and power, will find them out in any place under Heaven; and if they be ſlaves, he will redeem them, though he gives

Kingdoms and Nations for their Ranſom. In his love and in his pitty he redeemed them; and when by hard uſage they are grown ſo weak and feeble, that they can ſcarce go nor creep, why, he will carry them in his arms, and bare them. And thus he did of old; and his affections are rather greater than leſſer now, than they were then. The mother can be weary of carrying a dirty ſcreaming child; ſhe thinks it leſs trouble to whip him, or to let him lie till he hath cried himſelf weary; ſhe is loath to lug ſuch a troubleſome thing up and down all the day long. But yet ſuch is the tenderneſs of this Father, that he carries his all the day long, though they be ſo heavy, ſo unquiet, ſo dirty. But of that preſently. How oft do you read of ſtrange pity in the book of the *Judges*; when they had by their own folly more then once brought themſelves into calamity, how do his bowels yern over them; and when any of his are groaning under any trials or temptation, what ſending and running is there? how many Cordials are prepared for them? what calling to this ſervant and that ſervant to attend them with all the care that may be, and to comfort them in this ſtate? and in caſe of abuſe, how doth he ſhew his love to them? If you ſhould ask *Pharaoh*, he would tell you, that Gods Friends are edge tools: why elſe doth the Lord lay about him with ſo much indignation, when they are oppreſſed. Nay, for their ſakes he rebukes Kings, ſaying, *Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm*; if they do, be it on their peril. How did he bare the afflictions of his people *Iſrael* in *Egypt*? did he ſtand ſtill as if he were unconcerned? did he ſhut his eyes & not ſee? or did he ſtop

his

his ears to their cries? No, no, he ſees, he ſees the ſufferings of his in *Egypt*, and that both enemies and friends too ſhall know the one to their comfort, and the other to their coſt, *Exod.* 3.7. How doth he awaken for their help, and gird on his ſword upon his thigh, and march out with fury? how doth he cloath himſelf with vengeance, as with a robe, and brandiſh his glittering ſword, and ſheath it in the hearts of his and their enemies? Wherefore is it that God hath ſo many controverſies with *Edom*, *Ammon*, and *Amalek*? Why doth he muſter up his forces with violence againſt *Babylon*? Whoſe quarrel doth he engage in? What was the ground of that War? If you read over all the indictments that are before this great Judge, you will find this a common one their hatred of his people; and this to be ſure he will not put up. And that which puts an Accent upon all this, is the unworthy carriage of moſt of them towards him all this vvhile. But of that under the next *Head*, which is this.

Ninthly, He is the moſt patient Friend: Never any one in the vvorld could have diſgeſted ſuch affronts, born ſuch indignities, as God hath many a time, and even from the beſt of thoſe that he takes into this intimacy vvith himſelf. Had it not been for this Covenant of Friendſhip, *Judah* and *Ephraim* too had been ſoon unpeopled; as for them they ſoon forgot their Covenant, yet for all that God remembers his; though *Epharim* forget to be a Child, yet God can't forget to be a Father. Read that Text and wonder, *Hoſ.* 11.7, 8. *And my people are bent to back-ſliding: though they called them to the moſt high, yet none at all would exalt him.* Though they had many compaſſionate

Prophets that called after them day and night, when they ſaw them turning their backs upon God, yet they were not minded. Who now would conceive that God ſhould ever think a thought of kindneſs towards them more? yet hear what God ſaith, *How ſhall I give thee up, O* Ephraim? *how ſhall I deliver thee, O* Iſrael? *how ſhall I make thee as* Adam? *and how ſhall I ſeat thee as* Zebulon? *My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceneſs of mine anger. I will not return to deſtory* Ephraim; *for I am God and not man; the holy One in the midſt of thee, and I will not enter into the City.* Well, now tell me if ever there were ſuch a compaſſionate, meek, patient Friend. *Ephriam* was up in open Arms againſt his maker, he did rebel moſt unworthily againſt his good Lord and Friend, to whom he was bound by infinite Engagements. *Ephraim* had quite caſt off God, and he will have nothing to do with him; and *Judah* is not far inferiour to his treacherous Brother; and what will God do? One would think, as I ſaid before, he ſhould eaſe himſelf quickly of ſuch falſe friends; one would think that after ſuch unfaithfulneſs, he ſhould for ever baniſh them his Court; one would ſoon conceive that he ſhould think of diſ-inheriting ſuch rebellious Children; for theirs was not the firſt, ſecond, nor third time that they had ſerved God thus; who then could imagine that he ſhould ever trouble himſelf with them any more? Should one not look every day when he ſhould quite caſt them off? Why, God ſeems ſometimes to threaten as much, and ſeems ever and anon to act towards them, as if he would never

never look upon them more while the world ſtands. Go ſaith God to your Idols, let them ſave you? what do you come to me; for you have refuſed to have me for your God; go cry to your gods, and let them deliver you. Thus he ſeems to turn away his face; yea, for all that, ſee how ſoon he forgets his diſpleaſure, *Ephraim* is his Child, his dear Child, and he can't but pitty him; and how ſhall I give thee up, O *Ephraim*, &c. how hardly is God brought ſo much as to chaſtiſe his Children; he never corrects them, but when there is an abſolute need of it; ask the Church under the rod, and ſhe can't but ſay as much, *Lam.* 3. 32, 33. *For though he cauſe grief, yet will he have compaſſion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of men.* He calls judgment his work, his ſtrange work: and when he doth correct his ſtubborn Children, how doth he many times give them a laſh and a kiſs, a frown, and a ſmile? O what would have become of the holieſt men living, if God ſhould upon every provocation have broke with them. If God ſhould mark iniquities, O who ſhould ſtand? Which of the fallen Sons of *Adam* hath not abuſed his high Kindneſs? and yet for all that, how is his Patience and goodneſs exerciſed towards them; well might the Pſalmiſt make that the burden of one of his ſongs, *O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works towards the children of men*; & that of another, *For his mercy endureth for ever*. What created being could have born the thouſandth part of that from any hand that God doth every day from his deareſt children? What peeviſhneſs, and unfriendly quarrelling,

relling, what murmuring and repining, doth he bear, even from them for whom he hath done such great things? How ſtrangly do they carry themſelves! how ſeldom and complemental in their viſits of him! how cold and formal in their addreſſes to him! how frequently are they converſing with his baſeſt enemies! How much treachery and underhand-dealing doth he find in them! yet for all this, how great are his kindneſſes, and how open are his arms, upon their acknowledgement, to receive them again! Little do we think what unkindneſs the Lord overlooks; and indeed except we knew what it was to be infinite in holineſs, could we any way conceive how infinite his Patience is, *Pſal*, 106. 43, 44. *Many times did he deliver them: but they provoked him with their counſel, and were brought low for their iniquities. Nevertheleſs he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry, and he remembred for them his Covenant*, &c. Here, here's Patience, here's love and goodneſs with a witneſs! What Prince under Heaven would truſt a Rebel, that hath been in arms a hundred times againſt him, and that at the beſt doth ſerve him with ſo little delight? What friend would continue his familiarity and kindneſs there, where he hath found abundance of falſeneſs? and who but thou, O God, is ſo merciful and gratious, Long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth? As for the trouble that any of his meet with, moſt commonly they may thank themſelves for it; and it's always ſent them in kindneſs: there is none of them all but may ſay, this is my iniquity, this is the fruit of my back ſliding, this I have got by my eſtrangment from God.

Tenthly,

Tenthly, He is an honourable friend, and to be acquainted with him is the higheſt honour in the world. This word, honour, ſounds great in the ears of this proud world; what running and catching to get a little of it! How do many undervalue their lives, and make nothing to hazard their blood for a little of that men call Honour; ſome prize it above riches and wealth, and care not almoſt at what rate they purchaſe it; and yet in the mean while they are furtheſt from that which they ſo greedily deſire, and they run away from that which they ſeem to purſue. Poor ignorant man is fearfully miſtaken, he calls that his honour which degrades him, and takes that for his glory which is his ſhame: How is he pleaſed with that which when he hath, he neither ſees nor feels, and ſcarce knows what it is! (*Epict.*) What is it, O man, that thou looſeſt thy ſleep for? what is it that thou art at ſo much charge to buy? that rather than you will want it, Eſtate, Blood, Life and Soul, and all muſt go for it? Knight, Lord, Earl, *&c.* Worſhipful, Right-worſhipful, Honourable, Excellent, Gracious, are big words, and make a great noiſe; but is this the true honour? will theſe words without the thing do a man ſo much good? a man, I ſaid, and ſo doth God ſay too, and death will make the biggeſt of them all know as much ere it be long; for all thoſe big words; what if his breath ſtinks that ſpeaks theſe words, and his that hears them, be not much ſweeter. (*Antoninus*) Is it ſuch an honour to have a company of fools to call him wiſe that it may be is like themſelves? is it worth a Soul to have it ſaid when I am in hell, there lived a brave Gentleman, that kept a

Noble

Noble houſe, and brave Table, his Cellar was always open, one might come when one would, and drink as long as one could ſtand, and never hear, why do you ſo? and be always welcome; that is, in plain Engliſh, where a man might be incouraged to damn his ſoul. There lived a Noble gallant Perſon who bid defiance to the Almighty, that had courage enough to go to hell merrily, and had a deſire to carry as many along with him as might be; damning, ſwearing, curſing was their Language, ; eating, drinking, ſleeping, whoring and perſecuting the people of God their buſineſs. And are theſe your honourable Perſons? Nay, Go higher, to buſtle up and down in Cloth of Gold with a vaſt retinue; to have men on this ſide, and that ſide, bowing and cringing; and is this ſuch a buſineſs? Is it worth the while to keep ſuch a ſtir about that which a wiſe man may want, and a fool have? (*Anton.*) Will thoſe Names, that Grandeur and ſtate, thoſe high Titles, render you more acceptable to God? will they procure you a freer acceſs into the preſence of that great King? will thoſe great words ſcare death? will he ſay when he comes to your houſe, this is a perſon of quality, I muſt not be ſo bold as to come near him? will your honour procure you a protection from the arreſts of this Serjeant? Where is the Honourable perſonage, the Gentleman, Knight, Lord, King, or Monarch, that hath lived a thouſand years: (*Lucian*) Are the wormes affraid te gnaw thy heart? Will thy fleſh never putrify? Will your Servants, or your Maſter either honour you in Hell? And is this all that you keep ſo much a ſtir for, that can do you no good in the grave, or in another world? Can

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that be better worth then Heaven, then God? O that we might but know what it is, that great thing is, which is preferred before Christ and everlasting glory? Again, I ask what is it that the Grandees of the world do so much idolize? Is it to be called Wise, Great, and Noble? But what if the wise God call such a one a fool? (*Epict.*) What if he know neither himself, nor his God, nor his intereſt? Hath he much greater reaſon to boaſt then a feather that ſome body will ſay it is heavy; or dung, that the Swine ſaith it is ſweet. (*Juven.*) What profit is it for a man to be made great for betraying his Country, and flattering a Tyrant, who yeſterday was the ſon of a Stage-Player, and to morrow ſhall be ſhorter by the head? VVhat good will it to a beggar that is ready to be ſtarved, to be told that he is a Prince, a brave fellow, worth ſome thouſands by the year? But would you know which is the ready way to true honour? I tell you, it conſiſts not in the favor of them that muſt die like themſelves, and before that few years be over, muſt ſtand but upon even ground with the meaneſt; it conſiſts not in the ſorry acclamations of them which meaſure a mans worth by his eſtate, and their dependance upon him; it conſiſts not in the praiſe of them whoſe commendations ſome wiſe men have counted a diſcredit. But he hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is truly honourable; to do juſtly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God, *Micah.* 6. 8. To bare relation to God as a Father, and to carry themſelves as his Children, to be a Servant, and Friend of God, this, this is honourable, truly honourable, this is the heighth, the top of the Creatures preferment. To converſe

converſe with, and delight in his Maker. To love, admire, and rejoyce in God, and to love God, to take complacency in the ſoul; this is ſomething indeed, this is honour, a wiſe man would not grutch to venture his Eſtate, his Blood, his All for this. And how few of the Gallants of the world underſtand the nature of this honour? How do moſt of them account that which is the only true badge of Nobility, a term of diſgrace; and that which ſpeaks a perſon highly honourable, and to have brave blood running in his veins, to be low, ſordid, and much beneath them; as if it were below a Creature to ſerve his Maker, and a pitiful preferment to be advanced to glory. O that men of parts and learning, that perſons of Quality ſhould be ſo miſtaken! O what's become of their Reaſon? Is it an honour, a preferment for a man to become a brute? We a ready to pity mad men, and to laugh at fools; but whether there be not more reaſon to bemoan the condition of moſt of the honourable perſons in the world, I leave Chriſt and Chriſtians to judge. VVell then, will you be informed after all this by him, who hath all preferments and honours in his gift; I mean the great King, and he will tell you that Glory and honour are in his preſence, 1 *Chron.* 16 27. Mans onely honour and true dignity lies in his nearneſs, and acquaintance with God. A practical knowledge of his Maker is the Creatures greateſt preferment. *David* was of the mind, that it was none of the loweſt honours to be Gods ſervant, *Pſal.* 84. It is upon the account of *Iſraels* near Relation to God that *Moſes* reckons them the happieſt, the moſt honourable people

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in the world. Becauſe God had avouched them to be his peculiar people, therefore they might well be ſaid to be high above all the Nations which God had made, in praiſe, in name, and in honour; *Deut.* 26. 18, 19. And upon this account, might a wiſe man have his choice, whether he will wear a Crown, and be a ſtranger to God; or Rags, and be one of his neareſt ſervants; he will not ſtand long before he determine the caſe, he will ſoon anſwer with him, *That he had rather be a door-keeper in the houſe of God, then dwell in tabernacles of wickedneſs.* If mens actions may ſpeak their Judgements, moſt of the Gallants of the world are of a far different opinion. But, O let me dwell for ever in his houſe, and ſtand always in his preſence; happy are they that ſee his face, happy are they that behold his beauty. This, this mans Crown, this is his higheſt honour and dignity, for God to be mindful of man, and for his Maker to viſit him; this ſets him but little below the Angels, this Crowns him with glory and Honour, *Pſal.* 8. 45. This is that which puts a true perſonal worth upon any one; and therefore the *Pſalmiſt* thinks thoſe the excellent perſons, in whom is his delight. Upon this account the Scripture ſaith, *The righteous man, who is in covenant with God, is more excellent than his neighbour.* The pur-blind World, they judge altogether by the outward garb; they ſee the face, the rich apparel, they ſee the eſtate, but they ſee not that inward excellency and beauty that may be under but mean habit: they are ready to deſpiſe the Noble Worthies of the World, ſuch as can look upon Kingdoms as ſmall things in compariſon of what they have an intereſt in,

Who

who can call *God* Father, and Chriſt Brother? Have you never heard of a King in mean apparel, of a Prince without his Robes upon his back, or his Crown upon his head? and will you ſay that therefore he was but a common perſon? But thoſe heavenly Creatures that have a more ſpiritual refined ſenſe, that underſtands ſomething of things and Perſons, are quite of another mind, they can look upon great ones in the midſt of their gallantry, without a friend in Heaven, as mean perſons that have no intereſt to ſpeak of; and many of them, for all their greatneſs, to be in a far worſe condition then Dogs and Toads. They can alſo look upon a poor deſpiſed Saint, a contemned Chriſtian, though as to a carnal eye; he ſhould look as if he could ſcarce ſpeak ſenſe, to be a favourite of Heaven, a perſon of quality; ſuch a one as this he values as the Son of a King, a Citizen of *Zion*, one of the Royal Race, one of that glorious Retinue, that ſtand always in the preſence of *God* to ſerve him, the leaſt of which are Kings and Prieſts to their great Lord, *Rev.* 1. 6. *By faith he ſees their Crown, and looks upon that Royal Diadem, which ſhall ere long be put upon their princely heads.* This was the great preferment they fought, this was the honour they moſt deſired; as for the world and all its glory, they can well ſpare it for thoſe that ſhall never be advanced to any higher dignity, to any better preferment. As for the Saint, as contemptible as he looks, he hath higher deſigns, nobler things, greater honours in his eye; and if that which the world ſo admires were the higheſt glory that a rational creature were capable of, the top of mans preferment, why then he could look upon brutes

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themſelves as his equals, except in this, that their Pleaſures are more certain, and their Miſeries leſs underſtood.

It is ſtoried of *Conſtantine* and *Valentinian* two Roman Emperours, that they ſubſcribed themſelves *Vaſſallos Chriſti*, the vaſſals of Chriſt; and that *Numa Pompilius* eſteemed it a higher honour to be a *Friend* of *God*, than a *Lord* of *Men*. Conſider poor ſinner, conſider what honours you ſlight, what preferments you refuſe, what dignity you undervalue, when you make light of acquaintance with *God*. Had that brave Stoick, *Epictetus* I mean, known *God* in Chriſt, he would much more have wondered at the inconſiderateneſs of them which make nothing of being related to *God* as a Father, he would much more have pitty'd them which cleave to their lower, meaner kindred, beaſt, who had rather be like Swine than *God*, and rather be companions to their ſervants than their Maker. Seems it to you but a light matter to be a Kings Son? is it but a ſmall matter, think you, to call *God* Father? is it nothing to be born to a Crown Immortal, that fadeth not away? This is honour, this is preferment worth the having, worth the looking after, worth the venturing ones life for. This is true Nobility to ſtand thus nearly related to him, before whom the Angels do vail their glorious Faces, and at whoſe feet the four and twenty Elders lay their Crowns. The Queen of *Sheba* thought *Solomons* Servants, happy, who ſtood always in his preſence, and heard his VViſdom; but what would ſhe have ſaid, had ſhe but known the honour and glory of this Prince! O bleſſed are thoſe that ſtand alwayes in thy preſence!

O God bleſſed are thy ſervants, bleſſed are thoſe which ſee thy Glory, and hear thy Wiſdom; bleſſed are they that may have free acceſs to thee. O let me have this preferment, though I live like *Job* at his loweſt, and die like *Lazarus*. Let others ſue for the favour of Princes, let them make the beſt of what the world can give, let them deſire that which hath been dangerous to more than *Haman*; I hope I ſhould never envy them, might I but have more frequent and intimate converſe with God, may I be but acquainted with him; O may I have but a heart more to admire, love and delight in Him, and ſerve him with the ſtrength and intenſenſs of my Soul while I am here, and ſtand for ever in his preſence, and behold his glorious Face with joy hereafter. O my Soul what meaneſt thou, that thou ſtill ſpeakeſt ſo faintly and coldly of ſuch infinitely glorious things? Why doth not a new life animate thee at the very mention of theſe things? Haſt thou not far more cauſe to raiſe up thy deſponding Spirits with chearfulneſs, than old *Jacob*, when his Son *Joſeph*, who was Lord of that Land, ſent for him into *Egypt*? Thy Father O my Soul, thy Brother is Lord, not of *Egypt*, nor of *Goſhen*, but of *Eden*, of *Zion*; he is the King of that glorious City, the new *Jeruſalem*; Heaven is his Throne, and Earth is his Foot-ſtool, and yet behold the Waggons that he hath ſent for thee, behold the proviſion that he hath ſent to maintain thee comfortably in thy journey from *Egypt* to *Canaan*; is not this enough? O my Soul awake, up and ſee him before thou dieſt; behold, he is coming, the Bridegroom is coming, *Joſeph* is coming, to meet thee with a gallant

Train

Train, in a glorious Equipage; It is but yet a little vvhile, and thy Husband vvill come and fetch thee in Royal State, attended vvith a numberleſs retinue of Saints and Angels. O hadſt thou but an eye to behold their Chariots and Horſmen coming upon the Mountains: he is coming, he is coming, he vvill be here quickly, he will not tarry, he is at the door. Contemplate ſometimes on theſe things, and a little antedate that Glory by Spiritual Meditation, do but think vvhat a brave ſight that vvill be to ſee the mountains covered vvith Chariots of Fire, and Horſes of Eire, vvhen the Heavens ſhall bow before thy Friend, and the Earth ſhall melt at his preſence, and yet thy Heart not faint vvithin thee; vvhen the King ſhall come in the Clouds to fetch his Friends to his ovvn Houſe, vvhere they ſhall dvvell for Ever. This Honour have all the Saints.

Eleventhly, He is a ſuitable Friend. It is ſuitableneſs that ſweetens Society, I can eaſily believe a poor Countrey Peaſant can take as much content in the Company of a poor man like himſelf, as in the Society of a Prince; an unlearned Country man is no vvay fit to convers vvith Courtiers, and States-men; the vaſtneſs of the diſtance vvould ſo much ſwallow his mind, and the unſuitableneſs of his Spirit to ſuch company takes off that content vvhich otherwiſe he might enjoy. But yet in Spirituals, though the diſtance between God and Man beyond a poſſibility of our Conception, and the diſproportion infinite; yet the Soul of Man being immediately from God, and Spiritual like God, and having a Divine new Nature infuſed into it by the Spirit in

Regeneration, it finds an infinite ſuitableneſs, pleaſure and content in the injoyments of Gods Preſence, and it is not ſunk, but raiſed by an Union, Converſe and Society with it's Maker. The truth of it is, did Man but underſtand his own Original aright, he would think it infinitely below his noble Parentage to converſe with, and have intimate delightful Society with any but God and thoſe which bare the ſame relation to God with himſelf, or to bring poor ſtrangers acquainted with him as well as themſelves. There is not a match upon Earth fit for the Soul of Man to be matched to: But in that other Country there is a match indeed every way ſuitable; a Spirit for a Spirit, an everlaſting God for an everlaſting Soul; a precious Jeſus for a precious Soul, a holy God for thoſe which he hath made Holy like himſelf; and that is none of the leaſt of mans Happineſs, that notwithſtanding that infinite diſtance that is Naturally between him and his God, yet that God ſhould make in his Creature ſuch Noble Diſpoſitions, and ſuch Divine Qualifications, that there ſhould be the greateſt ſuitableneſs in the World between God and the Soul, and the ſoul and God; and they both take wonderful content in the enjoyments of one another. This is in part here, but compleated in Glory. This we may find oft in Scripture expreſſed in the neareſt Relations, and deareſt Affections. Hence God is ſaid to be a Father, and they his Children; a Husband, and they his Spouſe. Now what greater ſuitableneſs can there be than between Father and Children, Husband and Wife? God is alſo ſaid to delight in them, and they in him; to rejoyce in their Company, and they in His; and how

how could this be, except there was a ſuitableneſs in them one to another. Their wills are ſuited; what God wills they will; and what God loves, they love; and ſo what they love, as his Friends, God loves; one doth not thwart and contradict the other. O how ſweet then muſt the company, the communion of ſuch Friends be! O were our hearts as they ſhould be! were we more like God, we ſhould quickly experience the unſpeakable joy of our Souls, how ſuitable a Friend he is to a ſoul: we ſhould ſoon find, that as clay and ſtones are as unſuitable food for the body, ſo the world is unſuitable food for the ſoul to feed on, and that it is God alone that can fill and ſatisfie the vaſt deſires of it. O, I ſay again, were we but as we came out of our Makers hands, or rather were we trimmed up in our eldeſt Brothers Robes, and brought into the immediate preſence of this great King, were we ſet before that glorious Throne, where the infinite brightneſs of his Majeſty ſhines ſo that the Angels themſelves do vail their faces before him; yet for all that we ſhould not long ſtand ſilent, as if the place and company were unſuitable to us, it would not be long before vve ſhould carry it as thoſe that were nearly related, and had intimate acquaintance with him that ſits upon the Throne. O the unſpeakable ſweetneſs that will be the enjoyment of his Company! no tediouſneſs, no irkſomneſs at all upon our Spirits. We ſhall quickly underſtand our work, our priviledge. O infinite goodneſs! O boundleſs love! O let me be always ſolacing my Soul in the contemplation of theſe things! O let the very thoughts of them be a Heaven upon Earth to my ſoul! but

here, O here's the grief while we are here in a ſtrange Conntrey, there is ſomthing (in all the poor fallen Children of *Adam*, nay, in thoſe of them that are recovered, and by grace brought into a re-union with God) there is, I ſay, ſomething in God unſuitable to them, and in them unſuitable to God; and this, O this makes our lives ſo uncomfortable: but converſe with God will wear off a great deal of that. When thou comeſt to lay off thy Rags, and to put off thy old ſuit, and to put on that new one that is making for thee, I mean after Death, when thou comeſt to glory, thou wilt find the caſe ſtrangly altered with thee. In Heaven there will be a perfect Harmony, Suitableneſs and Agreement between God and thee for Ever; and thou wilt take infinite complacency and delight in him, and he in thee. And thus ſhalt thou ſpend Eternity in unconceivable joy, delight and pleaſures. This is Heaven, a perfect ſuitableneſs to God, and enjoying him for Ever. O when, when, ſhall it once be? *Come Lord Jeſus, come quickly, Come O bleſſed Father by thy Spirit, and burn up what is unlike thee! O Create a greater ſuitableneſs between my Soul and thee. O Come thou down to me, or take me up to thee!* O could we but talk with one of thoſe happy Creatures that hath been in the very preſence of God in glory, and ſhould we ask him, whether he were not weary of the ſame work, of the ſame company, the ſame place; what anſwer, do you think he would make you? No more weary than a man upon the Rack, but juſt before would be of perfect eaſe; no more than a healthful hungry Man is of eating; no more weary than the Sun is of runing, than the

Fire

Fire of aſcending, or a Stone of falling towards the Center. *Sen. Epiſt.* 10. *I know not where I had rather be thus with him. I was once upon Earth as you are now; and now I am in Heaven, and in neither of both theſe places can I find one that I can take more delight in than God.* I muſt ſay as he, *Pſal.* 73. 24. *Whom have I in Heaven but him? and there is none upon Earth that I can deſire in compariſon of Him.* I can't deſire a better employment than a delightful conſtant attending upon God: Can I have better Company than ſuch a Father? Can a greater happineſs be conceived than Eternal glory, a pleaſanter place than Heaven? That which I can ſpeak, you can't here; and could you (though in this perfect glory) I can't expreſs what you will find and feel when you come hither. O had I but known ſo much as I do now, when I was in your condition upon Earth I ſhould with incomparable greater earneſtneſs have ſought after acquaintance with God than I did. *In his preſence is fulneſs of Joy, at his right hand are pleaſures for Evermore:* Now I feel, now I know it. I thought one ſmile ſweet upon Earth, but now I ſee and feel infinitely more: what you enjoy now, is a ſhadow in compariſon of what you will enjoy hereafter. O what do you mean, that you prize his favour no more, that you get no more intimate acquaintance with Him? What do you mean that you are ſo unwilling to come to this place of joy? O, where you but poſſeſt of what I ſpeak of, you would ſay what I ſay, you would never be weary of praiſing and ſerving him, you would never wiſh your ſelf out of his preſence, and think it not poſſible to be in more ſuitable ſociety. Is it ſo, O my ſoul, what then doeſt

thou here? Make haſt O my ſoul, ſtay no longer here below, but know thy privledge, underſtand where thy comforts are.

Twelfthly, He is a wiſe Friend, All the men and women in the world have great, mighty affairs to manage; and they want Skil, Wiſdom and Diſcretion for the right management of theſe things, they are wofully to ſeek as to their great buſineſs; they are wiſe to do evil, but in Spirituals, they become ſtupid, ſottiſh Fools, and as to the carrying on of their great work, they do it with the greateſt imprudence in the world: and they will moſt certainly for ever undo themſelves, except one that is wiſer than themſelves undertake to help them. All things go backward with them, and they labour in the very Fire whileſt they act without God, and it is impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe as long as there is ſuch a diſproportion between mans buſineſs, and his Spirit? Man is carnal, and his work is ſpiritual. Would an ignorant poor Creature that is but one remove above a Beaſt, be fit to manage the great matters of Government? How ridiculouſly would he behave himſelf in a Chair of State! How ſtrangely would an unlearned Man bungle, ſhould he go about to open one of the profound Demonſtrations of Mathematicks! But a natural Man is far more unskilful than any of theſe, as to the carrying on of that great Imployment that he hath to look after, while he is on this ſide Eternity; his buſineſs is to ſerve his Maker, but what pittiful work doth he make of it? Man is made for an everlaſting State, he is ſent into this world to provide for another; a Good, a Happineſs there is, which he is to look after

after; he once had a fair Eſtate, but he hath ſpent and loſt it all, and he is to ſee to the recovering of it again. He hath been in Arms againſt his lawful Soveraign, and been guilty of the higheſt Treaſon, and thereby hath forfeited his Life, his Soul; now he hath his pardon to ſue out, and how doth he go to work in this one thing? To mention no more. Why he goes to beg a pardon arm'd Cap-a-pe, and with his Sword drawn, he comes to ask pardon for one Treaſon, and he is found acting of another. *Lord have mercy upon me, and give me leave to break thy Laws*, is the ſum of all his prayer. He talks of Heaven, and yet makes all the haſte he can to Hell; he is told he is out of the way, but he laughs at him that tells him ſo; and that's his beſt; Sometimes he rages, and deſires with all ſpeed to remove him that would ſet him in the Road to *Zion*; he calls for a Hatchet to cut down the bough upon which himſelf ſtands. And this is your Man of Wiſdom. The man is under ſail in the midſt of Rocks and Sands; and if he would but look, he might ſee many doleful Spectacles, to the tops of Maſts, ſhip-wracked ſouls I mean; and though the Pilots tell him of the danger, yet he ſays, he will never believe; but that's the beſt and the ſafeſt road to the Harbour, and ſo on he goes as if he were ſure he could not miſcarry; and all this while he will not be perſwaded but that he acts very wiſely; he judgeth it one of his greateſt comforts, that he runs to miſery without any hinderance; and how can it otherwiſe be, except men were ſpiritually Wiſe; and who can teach man this Wiſdom? Who ſhall inſtruct him? Who ſhall help him, now his affairs are upon the mat-

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ter almoſt deſperate? why, if thou wilt but hear, here is one that will yet undertake their foul cauſe if you will be adviſed by him, for this he will ſet all at right. And O how doth he call after you! How willing to give his advice! how deſirous to aſſiſt you. *Prov.* 1. 20. &c. *Wiſdom crieth without, ſhe uttereth her Voice in the ſtreets: She cryeth in the chief places of concourſe, in the openings of the Gates, ſhe uttereth her Words, ſaying, How long, ye ſimple ones, will ye love ſimplicity? And ye ſcorners delight in ſcorning, and fools hate Knowledg? Turn ye at my reproof: Behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my Words unto you.* And will you ſet at naught all his Councels, and have none of his reproofs! Will you rather be ruined than be beholding to him for Advice. Let me put in one word; if this wiſe Counſellor be not for you, he will be againſt you; and if you find any that can order your ſad affairs more to your advantage, I pray make uſe of him; but if you will be ruled by him, you can't miſcarry, as ill a condition as you are in; though thou beeſt quite broke, yet he will give you ſuch a ſtock as that you may ſet up again, and ſuch directions as that you can't but thrive, if you will but follow them. It is he that teacheth his Spiritual Frugallity, not to part with that for a trifle, which will be a rich commodity ere long; it is he who perſwades us to make the beſt uſe of every thing; it is he that teacheth Fools more true wiſdom than the great Politicians of the World; though the world judg them weak, yet they have wit enough to make a good Bargain; to value Heaven before Hell, to fly from everlaſting Burnings. They are wiſe enough to know

what

what is for their real advantage, and what not. This is he that would bring thee acquainted with him. It is he who give his ſo much underſtanding, as to know the true worth of things, and the difference between good and evil; finite and infinite, time and Eternity. Who is it that *David* goes to for council, when his politick Enemies combined againſt him? VVhere doth he adviſe? who brings him out of all his intricacies? Is it not He that I am perſwading you to go to, who was never out-witted, who can eaſily turn the councel of *Achitophels* into fooliſhneſs; It is he who can infatuate the great Sages of the World, and make them weaker than Children in their Councils. And this is he who will be a conſtant Councellor to all thoſe that are his friends, his acquaintance. *Seneca, Epiſt.* 41. 81. gives excellent Council indeed, which if we will preciſely follow, our matters can't but ſucceed. *Wert thou never in any ſtraights? are all thy affaires carryed on with ſo much prudence, both as to time and Eternity, that thou ſtandeſt in no need of advice? Art thou ſure that this will always be thy condition? If not, why then wilt thou not be perſwaded to ſtrike in here?* Why if you will believe them, which to their Comfort have tryed him again, and again, it is your unſpeakble intereſt and wiſdom to get God for your Friend, and then whatſoever you do, ſhall proſper by his adviſe; a poor Chriſtian can out-wit all the policy of Hell, and ſhew himſelf more wiſe than thoſe which call himſelf Fool, and count him mad, *Pſal.* 73. 24. *David* durſt truſt none elſe to guide him; but with his conduct he doth not fear but that he

ſhall

ſhall come ſafe to his journeys end, *Thou ſhalt guide me by thy counſels, and bring me to thy glory.* And again he ſaith, by the help of this Counſellour he was wiſer than his teachers, *Pſal.* 119. 18. Here therefore what you had beſt to do as matters ſtand with you, *Prov.* 4. 11. *He will teach thee in the way of wiſdom: He will lead thee in the right paths, When thou runneſt, thou ſhalt not be ſtraightned, and when thou runneſt, thou ſhalt not ſtumble, &c.* 1 Cor. 1. 15. *Becauſe the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men.* That which looks moſt contemptibly, if throughly underſtood, will be found to have more depth in it than the wiſeſt men of the world can reach. To chooſe ſuch a Friend, this is wiſdom, this is prudence. The godly man knows that he hath a great cauſe to be decided ere long, and it will be no loſt labour to make the Judg his Friend. Well, what ſay you, ſinners, is this conſiderable that I do now propound, or is it not? Can you plead your own cauſe, can you clear your title to glory without him? if not, be well adviſed before you ſlight ſuch a motion, as I now do make to you.

13. He is an immortal Friend. I, that's a Friend indeed. If one friend could be ſure to live juſt as long as the other; and were friends ſure never to want the advice, comfort, ſociety, and help one of another, it would not a little advance the worth of a friend. But where is ſuch a one to be found? What Hiſtories can give us an account of ſuch amities? Let perſons be united in never ſo cloſe an union, conjoyned in the faſteſt knot that nature can tie, yet death will firſt or laſt diſſolve it. So that ſometimes I have

have been almoſt of this mind, as to all wordly friends, conſidering them abſtract from God (for grace in any friend doth unſpeakably ſweeten the relation and ſuch a relation will not dye) if we compare the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of poſſeſſing, and the bitterneſs in loſing, with the ſweetneſs of enjoying; that it's ſomewhat difficult to reſolve, whether ſuch ſhort-liv'd Comforts are worth the looking after. Not but that I think a friend, a true friend, a great mercy, and much to be deſired; but really, if our Affections be not for Gods ſake, if our love be not regulated by Religion, I can eaſily believe that the bitterneſs in loſing doth over-ballance the pleaſure in enjoying. And who would much trouble himſelf to get that with care, which muſt be poſſeſt with fears, and will be parted with Tears? All wordly enjoyments will ſerve us thus. When we expect moſt from them, and pleaſe our ſelves to think what Content we Enjoy in them, ten to one, if God loves us, but that he either imbitters, or takes away that Comfort from us. One ſaith, I had a dear Husband, ſuch a one as never woman had, but he is Dead, I have loſt him. Another ſaith, I had a precious Child, a Brother, but he is gon. And every body will be in this note firſt or laſt. And if the caſe be thus, who would be ſo fooliſh as to let out the ſtrength of his ſoul, upon that which he may ſoon be deprived of? But here, here's a Friend, whom you need not fear over-loving or loſing, a never dying Friend, one that will be ſure to out-live you, (*Ar. Epict. l.* 3. *c.* 22.) *Say of what you will, that it is mortal, and you have diſgraced it enough? for how can*

that

that be of any great worth which can die, and when I have most need of it I may want; but this can't be said of God, he only is immortal, and not subject to changes. As for the favour of Princes and great Ones, at the best, it is but an uncertainty: for it may be all thy hopes are bound up in this life, and that hour which puts an end to his dayes, puts a period to thy Comfort? But it is another kind of friend that I would have you acquainted with. O why do Christians dote upon that which is so short liv'd? Make but choice of this friend, and you shall never say of him, he is dead, I have lost him. *Wherefore put not your trust in the Son of Man, in whom there is no help; for his breath goeth forth, and he returneth to his Earth. But happy is he that hath the God of* Jacob *for his help, whose hope and love is fixed upon the Lord his God which made Heaven and Earth,* &c. *That God who is called the Living God,* Psal. 146. 3, 4, 5, 6.

14*thly*, He is a present friend, a friend that is alwayes in all places. Mans condition may possibly be such, as that he may be deprived of the company of his dearest wordly Relations, he may be sequestred from the society of his most helpful and necessary Friends! How oft have the dear Children of God been clapt up in Dungeons, not only from the sight, but from the knowledg of their most affectionate acquaintance? It's no unusual thing for them to be Banish'd from their native Countrey. Wives and Children, among Savage Men and Beasts, they have no man to make their complaints to, but such as will increase their sorrows. How frequently may they be in such a condition, as that they may not see, hear or speak to any Friend? what

Bolts

Bolts and Bars, what Walls and Guards to keep them from them, which if they could not free them from, yet might in ſome meaſure alleviate their miſery? But now God is ſuch a friend, who cannot, who will not be kept out from his by Walls of Braſs or bars of Iron, he will find out his Friend in the darkeſt hole, and bare them company there in ſpight of all the powers of Hell, O how reviving are his viſites? What Cordials doth he bring along vvith him. This is that vvhich makes the people of God ſo very chearful, vvhen their Enemies make account their condition is ſuch, as that it hath no mixture of joy or comfort in it. Was that a Priſon or Heaven vvhere thoſe Martyrs were ſinging Hallelujahs? Was that a time, to be ſo merry, when all the World diſowned them, vvhen they vvere loaded vvith Reproaches, and Irons, and Chains, counted the troublers of the Nation, mad-men, Hereticks? The caſe is clear: the ſight of this friend made them forget their Scorns, and think their chains Gold, and their priſon Liberty. It vvas God that ſpake it, and he hath been found to be as good as his vvord, *Iſa.* 43. 1, 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord that created thee, O* Jacob, *& that formed thee, O* Iſrael: *Fear not, for I have Redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy Name, thou art mine: When thou paſſeſt through the Waters I will be with thee: and thorow the Rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt throw the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt: neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.* Who vvas that vvhich bore the three children Company in the fiery furnace? who vvas that vvhich vvent into the Lions Den to viſit *Daniel*? who brought *Paul* alive to this

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ſhore when the ſhip in which he went was wrak't? VVas it not this Friend, that I am now ſpeaking of? I might be large in reciting the Miraculous preſervations which God hath vouchſafed to his, which is a manifeſt token of his preſence; when none can come near, beſides, he will not be far off. In the greateſt Extremities, which none durſt own them, then God reckons it time for him to ſhew himſelf. It was not for nothing that the *Pſalmiſt* could ſpeak ſo chearfully when others were quaking, *Pſal.* 64. 12, &c. VVhat was it that bore up his ſpirits, when there were ſuch dreadful Commotions? VVhat refuge hath he to ſhelter himſelf under in time of ſuch Calamity? In what doth his ſtrength lie, that he is ſo confident? VVhence doth he expect a ſupply, that he holds it out bravely, when his Enemies are ſo numerous, and his Friends ſo ſcarce? VVhy *David* hath his inviſible Friends, as well as viſible Enemies. Ask him, and he will tell you, That God is his refuge and ſtrength, and he is his confidence, and he will come in when he hath the greateſt need; he will be a very preſent help in trouble. And that is the reaſon that *David* will not fear, though the ſtorm were far greater than ever yet he was in, though the Earth were removed, and the Mountains were caſt into the midſt of the Sea; though the foundations of the Earth were ſhaken, though the Sea ſhould roar and threaten the earth with another deluge, he can ſleep as ſecurely as a perſon little concerned; and this he can ſpeak, not only for himſelf, but for the whole City of God; God is in the midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved. The Saint

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hath a Friend that will bear him company in all places, in all dangers, and in his company he need not be afraid. Let the leaſt child that God hath, give but one cry, and he will ſoon awake. It can't but be ſo from the ſpirituality of his nature, the immenſity of his being, and the infiniteneſs of his love. It was Orthodox Divinity and Doctrine that *Ar. Epictetus l.* 2. *c.* 14. preached (though but a Heathen) when he ſaid, *That the firſt leſſon that became a wiſe man to learn, was, that there was a God, and then, that nothing in the world could be concealed from him, and that he knew not only our outward actions, but our moſt ſecret workings, our cloſeſt curtain buſineſſes; and not only ſo, but even our thoughts, projects and principles: which ſpeaks him every where, and conſequently ready at hand to help his Friends at a dead lift. Wherefore* (ſaith the ſame Author, *Idem. l.* 3. *c.* 22.) *think not that thou art alone when thou art in thy Chamber, in thy bed, when thy Curtains are drawn, when thou art lock'd up in a priſon never ſo dark under ground; if thou art good, thou ſhalt have two companions in ſpight of the malice of all thy enemies, a good Conſcience, and thy God.* This made that brave Moraliſt to dare his enemies to do their worſt to exclude his Friends from him. *Can* (ſaith he) *any man be baniſhed out of the world? whereſoever you ſend me, there will be the Sun, Moon, and Stars; but if not, God is there, I am ſure, with whom I may talk, to whom I may pray; he will bear me company, though all the reſt of my Friends be kept from me. And as long as you can't baniſh me from God, nor keep him from me, I ſhall reckon my ſelf at liberty; and ſhould I be ſent out of this world into another, even there I ſhould find my*

Friend; and he will ſcarce complain that is removed from a place where almoſt all are his enemies, to a place where quite all are his Friends. One would have thought theſe poor Heathens had been reading, *Pſal.* 139. Do you hear O Chriſtians, what language thoſe forementioned perſons ſpeak? and ſhall theſe that never had the thouſandth part of that advantage for the knowing of God, ſpeak and act thus, & ſhall Chriſtians have ſuch low thoughts of God? becauſe we do not ſee God, ſhall we therefore not believe that he is preſent every where? he that denies Gods own preſence, had upon the matter as good deny his being; for were it not ſo, how could he Judge the world with Juſtice? How could all things be ſuſtained by his power? God takes this as a very high indignity, that any ſhould in the leaſt queſtion this glorious attribute, *Jer.* 23. 23, 24. *Am I a God at hand, and not a God a far off? Can any hide himſelf in ſecret places, that I ſhall not ſee him, ſaith the Lord? Do not I fill Heaven and Earth, ſaith the Lord.* And is not this a Friend worth the having, who will be ſure not to be abſent when you have need of him? the wicked indeed ſay, how doth God know, and can he ſee through the thick Clouds, and therefore they ſin with confidence, and oppreſs the Friends of God without any fear; they hope God doth not behold, they think omniſcience knows not. I wiſh there were not ſomething too like this ſometimes in the thoughts of Gods people too; but let me only leave that one Scripture with the firſt ſort, *Pſal.* 94. 9, &c. *He that planted the ear, ſhall he not hear? He that formed the eye, ſhall he not ſee? He that teacheth men knowledge, ſhall not he know? The Lord knoweth*

knoweth, &c. As for the desponding Christian that begins to think God is out of the reach of his Prayers, let me ask thee, O thou of little Faith, when did God ever absent himself from his in a time of need: When was he quite out of the hearing of their cry? I know indeed he may hide himself, yet then he is near them also, to try their love, and hear their voice, for God loves to hear his Children cry; (earthly Parents may correct their Children for crying, but God chastiseth his Children usually for their silence.) When he seems furthest off, he is but behind the Curtain, he is there where he with pleasure sees how earnestly his Children look up and down for him: and then when they are ready to sit down weeping, as if they had lost their Father; when they think they are quite forgot, and their enemies begin to triumph, and to ask, where now is your God? Then he lets both friends and foes know that he is near. And what say you to all this, you that as yet are strangers to God? Have you gotten such a friend as he is, that will always be at your elbow, that can and will come to help you (when other friends are far enough off,) whether man will or no? have you got such a friend? If not, why then will you not now accept of his acquaintance, who will be such a friend to all that love him? No good man is without the company of God, he walks with God, he talks with God, he eats with God, he drinks with God, and is entertained by him, and he sleeps in his Arms. God is with him in his Shop, in the Rode, at Home and Abroad, and who can miscarry that hath so helpful a companion always with him? When thy burdens are too heavy,

do but complain, and he will either take them off thy back, or put under his own ſhoulders, and help thee to go away lightly with them; he will aſſiſt thee in ſix troubles, and in ſeven he will give thee help.

15. He is a Soul-Friend, Soul-Friends are the beſt friends. As ſoul-affairs are the mightieſt affairs; ſo thoſe that give us the greateſt help in thoſe matters ought to be valued. God is the great Soul-Friend; expect not to find him a friend to thy luſt, this ſcares the wicked from him, who would be glad to be acquainted with God, if he would gratifie their luſts, and pleaſe their wicked humors, and give them eternal happineſs after a life of wickedneſs; that is, would ungod himſelf for their ſakes. But hold there man; you ſhall ſooner ſee the Sun black, and have fire cold, and find a heaven in hell, than have God a friend to your Sin. God doth not promiſe to furniſh all his acquaintance with proviſion for their ſenſuality, he will not put a knife into thy hands to ſtab himſelf, or to cut thy own throat. There are too many of ſuch friends in the world, and men are generally ſo fooliſh as to count them friends, which deſerve another name; theſe are they which help men to Hell, and ſhew them the ſhorteſt cut to eternal miſery, and this muſt go for a ſpecial kindneſs. Sure men and women will ſcarce be always of this mind. Muſt poiſon in a gilded cup go for a Cordial, and a kiſs, though with a dagger, be taken for true love? *Seneca* had more wit than to reckon ſuch among benefactors. He that can teach me the way to true happineſs, he that can help me to adorn, dreſs and trim my Soul; he by whoſe inſtructions

I ſhall be more in love with vertue, and out of love with ſin; he by whoſe directions I may be acquainted with my ſelf, and made truly to value that which is really moſt excellent, this ſhall be my friend, this ſhall be my companion. And where are ſuch friends to be found? How few of them in the world? Do not moſt, that go under that ſweet name of friends, do one another the greateſt unkindneſs that can be imagined! How do they incourage one another in an evil way, *Prov.* 1. *Pſal.* 2. How do men tug and pull to get one another apace into damnation; and if the wiſe world may be Judges, none muſt go for a friend, but he that would do me moſt miſchief; none muſt be counted an enemy, but he that deſires to do me the moſt real kindneſſes. This ſounds ſtrangely: yet for all that, did it lie in my way, I could eaſily prove it. Yet I muſt confidently affirm, that every ones experience, firſt or laſt will ſay us much. Something of this I have taken notice of, in my converſing with dying men. I remember, once more particularly, being by a poor Creature that was juſt a going into another world, one of his old friends looked in to ſee him, at the ſight of which perſon he gnaſhed his teeth, and could not indure him in the room, but cryed out, this was he that brought me to this, I may thank him, or I had not been in ſo ſad a condition upon a death-bed. But this by the by. Open enemies are better than ſuch friends. I ſay again, do not expect to have God ſuch a friend. God loves his too well to let them undo themſelves; he knows the worth of Souls; and pitties them that would part with their ſouls for a trifle, and therefore he tells men plainly, that

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which may be really prejudicial to the health of their Souls; he can't but let them know what is food, and what is poiſon: what elſe is the meaning of thoſe vehement expoſtulations? Why doth he ſend ſo many meſſengers one after another? To what purpoſe elſe doth he tender ſuch promiſes, ſuch incouragements? Be it known therefore unto thee O man, if thou underſtand'ſt the worth of thy own ſoul, and would'ſt have that Soul of thine to do well for ever, and would'ſt have a friend for thy Soul, that there is but one ſuch a friend to be found in the whole world, and that is God. O haſt thou no regard at all for thy precious and immortal Soul? Doſt thou never think of that excellent thing within thee? Doſt thou not care though thy Soul ſtarve, be naked and miſerable for ever? Is it nothing to thee, that thy Soul hath not ſo much as a ſhelter to hide it ſelf under, when a dreadful ſtorm ſhall riſe, and death ſhall turn it out of his old Tenement? Doſt thou not believe that it muſt have a being ſomewhere for ever, and that either in everlaſting glory or eternal burnings? and are theſe ſmall matters with you? What, will you for all this take no care in the world about theſe grand affairs? Had a ſpecial friend committed but a Dog to thee to take care of, you would have thought your ſelf engaged in gratitude and honour, to have ſuited your care of him to your reſpect to the perſon from whom you had him. (*Epict.*) *But doſt thou not know, O man, that thy God hath committed a Soul to thy care, & hath told thee what thou ſhalt do to reſerve the life and health of this thy ſoul, that it may be in good plight when he ſhall call for it. He doth tell thee what is its moſt natu-*

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ral food, and what is not wholſome. He tells thee what thou ſhalt do to have that ſoul within thee everlaſtingly happy. And is all this of ſo little conſequence, as to go in at one ear and out at the other? Are theſe things to be indifferent in? If mans ſoul vvere like the ſoul of a beaſt, the caſe were altered; if when his breath vvent out of his body there were an end of him, the matter were the leſs conſiderable; if he had ever a friend in another world, that could do as much for him as God can do, I ſhould have little to ſay in this buſineſs. But ſince this is impoſſible, how can I bear to ſee thee neglect the making ſure of ſuch a friend? How can a Chriſtian vvith any patience think, that thoſe that he lives with, and dearly loves, ſhould miſs of ſuch a friend, without whom their ſouls muſt be everlaſtingly miſerable. If it vvere only for your bodies or eſtates, I ſhould ſcarce uſe ſo many words, neither I believe need I; but when it is for your ſouls and eternity, who can be ſilent? Once more conſider vvhat a friend thou mayſt have; it is a friend for thy ſoul. Alas man, it is thy ſoul, thy precious ſoul that lies at ſtake; that Spirit within thee, which is more worth than a vvorld; it is that vvhich is in hazard, and here is a friend that offers thee to make that ſoul of thine happy for ever. Thy ſoul hath abundance of enemies: Some vvould debaſe it, others would rob thee of it, others would clap up a haſty match between that Noble Creature and a Servant, the World I mean: and there are very few that have any true kindneſs for it, and thou knoweſt not the vvorth of that Jewel, thy Soul; but here, here's a friend, if thou wilt but leave it with him, he vvill take care of it, it ſhall not be marted away for

nothing. Here's one will do that for its ſecurity, honour and happineſs, that all the world beſides can't do. If therefore thou haſt any love for the poor ſoul, if thou ſetteſt any price upon that precious thing within thee; in a word, if thou wouldeſt have thy ſoul do well in another world, O ſtrike in here, cloſe with theſe tenders, liſten to the counſel of him who offers you the beſt advice in the world. He, he it is that now offers thee that thou canſt never value enough; he it is that will feed, cloath, and portion that Soul of thine, and after that marry thee to his oneiy Son; by which match you will be made for ever. O did men and women but know what a Soul is, did they imagine what a dreadful miſcarriage of a Soul is, did they but in any meaſure underſtand the things of their peace, could they but conceive what God could and would do for their Souls, I need to ſpend but little time in perſwading them to commit their Souls to him, to be acquainted with him, who will be ſure to take ſpecial care of their Souls, that they may do well, whatever is neglected. O could you but ſee, did you but know what a ſad taking they are in, that go into the other world with a poor naked Soul, and know no body in the world there, and have never a friend that doth take any notice of them, you would then think I ſpoke what I do with reaſon enough, and that my words were too ſhort, and my expoſtulations too faint in a matter of ſuch concernment. O ſinners, I tell you, nay, God tells you, ſoul-matters are the greateſt matters in the world. I am ſure Chriſt thought ſo, or elſe he would not have been at ſo much coſt about them; thoſe that are in their wits and under-

underſtand themſelves, they know as much too, and ſo will you, ere a few years, it may be hours, be paſt. Thoſe that now make but a piſh of all this, when they have been but one quarter of a hour in another world, will ſay as I do, that a Soul-friend is the only Friend, and that Soul-concerns are the great concerns, things of weight and moment indeed; and that it would have quitted the coſt to have taken ſome pains to have look'd out for ſuch a one that could have ſtood the Soul in ſome ſtead in that other world; and that above all, it would have been no folly nor madneſs to have accepted of the kindneſs of one that deſired earneſtly to be acquainted with them, and to do their Soul a good turn. O that they had but been ſo conſiderate, as to have embraced ſuch a motion when it was offered! And this brings me to the next Qualification of this Friend.

16. He is a neceſſary Friend. There is an abſolute neceſſity of being acquainted with him. 'Tis poſſible for a man that hath very few friends upon earth, to live as happily as he that hath many. Multitude of acquaintance, ſuch as they are, may contribute much to a mans care and ſorrow. And as for moſt friends, ſuch as are commonly ſo called, it is better to have their room than their company. A man may live without the acquaintance of Nobles, he may be as free, chearful, and rich without the knowledge of ſuch as them. One may live holily, and die joyfully, and may be happy for ever, though he never ſaw the face of a Prince, though he was never at Court, though he lived and died a ſtranger to all worldly friends. One may be diſown-

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ed by his Father, hatred by his Mother, ſlighted by all his Relations, and have never a friend under the Sun that will own him, and yet for all that be in a ſtate of truer felicity, than thoſe that are daily attended with troops of viſitors, whoſe gates are ſeldom ſhut, vvhoſe houſes are never empty: but amongſt all that comes, God never comes to them, as for his company they are ſtrangers to it; this man I may write miſerable for all his great and many friends. And him that hath the company of God in acquaintance with his Redeemer I'le call happy, though he have never a friend in the world beſides. Multitude of friends ſeldom add much to our comforts, but always to our cares. A man may go to Hell for all his great acquaintance with men; but it's impoſſible, if we are greatly acquainted with God to miſs of Heaven. When men are unkind, if God be kind, it's well ballanced; but if God frown, whoſe ſmiles can comfort? I may be happy, though I am very little in mans favour; but it's impoſſible to be happy without Gods favour. To be a ſtranger to God, is to be a ſtranger to peace, joy, Heaven. O it's ſad being without God! If I ſhould declare the Judgement of moſt in the world, at leaſt if their practice may ſpeak for them, they ſee very little need of acquaintance with God. They do not write, *Muſt*, upon the things of Religion. They muſt eat, they muſt drink, they muſt ſleep, and if they want any of theſe things, they count themſelves in a ſad condition. But further, they muſt riot, they muſt be drunk, they muſt whore, they muſt have what their luſt calls for, let it be what it will, they muſt get into the favour of ſuch and ſuch a great

perſon whoſe diſpleaſure they have incurred: Theſe are things that the world ſay muſt be; they are reckoned among the neceſſary things: but they do not ſay they muſt have a Chriſt, they muſt be reconciled to God, they muſt deny themſelves, they muſt ſeek firſt the Kingdom of Heaven; No, theſe are indifferent things amongſt them, theſe are things minded by the by, if not matter of ſcorn and jeſting, theſe the world think unneceſſary things. It's neceſſary their fleſh ſhould be pleaſed, it's neceſſary the Devil ſhould be obeyed, it's neceſſary they and theirs ſhould be ſomebody in the world, theſe are matters of weight, for theſe they think it worth the while to toil and moil, to ride early and late, and to loſe their ſleep, and think they can never do too much; and all this while they ſee no need at all of getting a friend for their ſouls, no need at all of knowing, loving and delighting in God. Well, ſeeing the caſe is thus, ſeeing it is no great matter whether you know God, or be known of him; be not then troubled at the day of Judgement, if God look upon you as a ſtranger then, be not grieved (ſeeing the knowledge of God is nothing with you) if God ſay he knows you not; if Gods preſence be no ſuch material thing, complain not then for the want of it; be content, if you can, to hear him ſay, *Depart, I know you not.* O, but ſhall I thus leave you, poor ignorant ſinners? Conſider for the Lords ſake, for thy ſoul ſake, whether it be a neceſſary thing to avoid everlaſting burnings; is it a neceſſary thing to be ſaved? Is Eternal Glory and Heaven neceſſary? dare you ſay theſe are unneceſſary things? If theſe be neceſſary, then I am ſure

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God and Christ are necessary; *For this is Life Eternal to know God, and him whom he hath sent, Jesus Christ.* O how will the case be altered ere long, with the God-hating and Christ-despising world? when they shall be quite despoiled of all that which they prized above the knowledge of God, when all their friends shall appear to be enemies, when all their hopes shall be swept down like a Spiders web: O will they not then be of this mind, that it was no such slight matter that I was so earnest with them about, that acquaintance with God was no such unnecessary thing as they took it to be; and that there was more need of getting an interest in Christ, than of running to a Play-house, or a Whore-house. How will they rend the skies with their fruitless wishes? How will the Mountains eccho with their doleful lamentations? O that God would but know them! O that they might not hear that word, Depart! but seeing all that to little purpose, how then will they exclaim against themselves? O that they should be such fools that they should be so madly besotted, as to neglect the looking after acquaintance with God! Time was, that God would have had them to come to him; he called after them, and sent for them again and again, but they would none of his company, they desired not the knowledge of the most High; they said to him, Depart from us: and now they have what they then desired; now they see that the Ministers had cause enough to say what they did, and a thousand times more. As troublesome as it was to hear of Hell, it's worse to feel it. They see now *Must* is for the Soul, and not the Body. O

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that men and women would be now as serious in their judgments about these things as they will be shortly? Consider, O man, that as little as thou mindest these things, these are the only things that are necessary. Thou *must* have a God for thy Friend, a Christ for thy Saviour to save thee from thy sins, or else thou *Must* be damned, or else thou *Must* be cursed for ever. Thou mayst lie racked upon thy bed of sickness, where none can help thee; thou mayst rot in a stinking dungeon, where no man can relieve thee; thou mayst be roasted in the flames, and yet for all this be a happy man. Worldly ease, pleasure, health, riches, are none of those absolutely necessary things. A man may go to Hell and have them all, and a man may go to Heaven and want them. Thou mayst have Eternal Rest in another Life, though thou hast scarce a day of ease in this. One may be a Favourite of God, though as miserable as *Job*. But what will you say, of that man that hath not a God to go to? This, this is the miserable man with a witness? O that seeing mens lives are so short, they would wisely husband their precious time in minding nothing but necessary things! O that unnecessaries might be cut off! When I am about to undertake a business, let me ask my Soul this question: O my soul, is this a business of absolute necessity? hast thou not something of greater importance that is yet undone? We enter not into the Lists for honour, where it is no great matter, whether we conquer, or no; we perswade not men to busie themselves about toys, we are not so importunate about a thing of nothing. No Sirs, as unnecessary as you think these things we speak of

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are, ere long you will say as much as we do, and more too; you'l ſhortly, find that it was as much as your life and happineſs was worth that lay at ſtake. Theſe are things we muſt mind you of, or elſe we hazard our ſouls; and they are things that you muſt mind alſo, or elſe you hazard yours. I want ſignificant words enough, to expreſs the weight and importance of theſe things, O that what is wanting of that nature, might be ſupplied with tears, groans and compaſſions. I am through mercy aſhamed of my own heart, (O that I were more ſo) that I ſhould ſpeak of ſuch ſerious matters ſo ſlightly. It is not now a time to jeſt, O my ſoul, when thou art to diſcourſe with miſerable men and women, which refuſe their happineſs, and dote upon their miſery. Thou art now about a work that concerns ſouls, and their eternal ſtate. Tell me dear friends, do you in ſober ſadneſs believe that you have immortal ſouls? do you indeed know that your ſouls are naturally enemies to God, and that if you be not reconciled to God, that you muſt be dealt with as enemies? do you really believe all this? do you believe what a dreadful thing it is to look ſuch an enemy in the face when he ſhall ſit in Judgement? Further, do you believe what it is to lie down in devouring flames, and to dwell with everlaſting burnings? do you not think it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God? and if you do not, let me tell you, you are worſe than mad; if you do believe all this, why, then let me ask you again, whether you conceive it unneceſſary to uſe the utmoſt care and diligence to get acquainted with him: who can deliver you from

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the wrath to come? O friends, I call you ſo, and I believe moſt of you love me dearly! O that you would do me one kindneſs; I ſhould count it the greateſt kindneſs that you can do me, why, what is that you ſay! why, it is but to pity your own Souls; and to mind that one thing neceſſary, and to pitty them that are mourning for your dry eyes, and hard hearts? What ſay you to all this? if you have any thing to ſay againſt the neceſſity of theſe things, I am ready to plead the caſe with you, &c. Well, if it be not neceſſary to know God and Chriſt, and lay in proviſion for eternity, what then is neceſſary? If it be not neceſſary to ſerve, love, and delight in him, who can deliver from everlaſting death, and reward with everlaſting life, what then is? Once more, for your Souls ſakes conſider what you do, when you vigorouſly purſue worldly things, and look upon the favour, and diſpleaſure of God, as ſmall things! O write not theſe things down amongſt the ſuperfluous things which are to be minded by the by. Remember this, that it is very poſſible for a man to be exceeding holy, and yet to be altogether unknown to the world; but it is altogether impoſſible to be truly happy, and yet unacquainted with God.

17. He is a tryed Friend. Thouſands and Millions can from their own experience, ſay all this, which I have ſaid of him, and much more; but I ſhall paſs this over at preſent, having hinted it already, and becauſe it may be I may touch upon ſomething of the ſame Nature hereafter.

18. He is an everlaſting Friend. I ſhall be but brief in ſpeaking to this head, becauſe what might have been ſpoken of this, fell under that

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of his immortality. Yet becauſe it is poſſible to conceive God immortal in himſelf, and yet by reaſon of mans default, his kindneſs to him to be finite; ſo it was in reſpect of the Angels that fell from him. But now Bleſſed be free Grace, man ſtands upon ſurer ground than ever he did, the children of God have a firmer bottom by far than *Adam* had when he was in Paradiſe; his ſtate is more ſecure, being once united to God in Chriſt, than that of the Angels of Heaven in their firſt Creation. For that their State was mutable, is *de facto* proved; but now bleſſed be rich goodneſs, if we can but make ſure of reconciliation with God, again it is impoſſible for us to miſcarry. God hath ſworn, and he will perform it, that the heirs of glory might have the more ſtrong conſolation, *Iſa.* 54. 6, 19. *For this is as the waters of* Noah: *for I have ſworn that the waters of* Noah *ſhould no more go over the earth, ſo have I ſworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains ſhall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the Covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.* Gods children need not fear diſ-inheriting: his gifts, and callings are without repentance. If God loved us while we were enemies, how much more being reconciled will he continue his love to us; once a Child of God, and a Child of God for ever; once in favour, and never out of it again, *Rom.* 8. 35, 39. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? ſhall tribulation, or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine. or nakedneſs, or peril or ſword. Nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* Who can

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pluck us out of the Arms of the Almighty? Who, or what is that which can alienate our Fathers affections from us? If the promiſe of God, which ſaith, I will never, never, never, never, never leave nor forſake you, be valid, if his oath bind him, if the blood of Chriſt continue always to be ſatisfactory, if his mediation can prevail, if the nature of God be unchangeable, we are well enough, we are ſafe, if this be but clear that we are really reconciled to God, if we be acquainted with him, we are kept by the mighty power of God through Faith unto Salvation. If they had been of us, ſaith the Apoſtle, no doubt they would have continued with us. It is poſſible indeed, yea, common for men to pretend love to God, and to ſeem to have a true friendſhip for him, and yet not to be truly ſo. To have a name to live, and to live are two things. It is not unuſual to bear God company (as I may ſay) abroad, and yet at home to have ſome body that they have a greater kindneſs for. It is common to go along with God (if I may ſo call it) in the external actions of Religion, and yet to deſert him at laſt, *Iſa.* 58. 1.2.3. *Mat.* 7. 21. There are many that ſeem to bid fair for Heaven, and if cap and knee will do, God ſhall have that; they will give him the huſk and ſhell, that they may keep the kernel for one that they love better. Thouſands there are of ſuch perſons in the world; and theſe profeſs abundance of kindneſs for God, they come oft to his houſe, and ſit down there, and make as if they were his friends, and his acquaintance, and ſome of Gods ſervants, by a miſtake, may bid them welcome, but yet for all this they may be ſtrangers; only they have

heard of God, and can talk of him, and it may be have given many tranſient viſits, but yet they want the real properties of Friends: they never knew what it was to be brought nigh to the Father, by the Son; to have a ſence of their loſt ſtate and eſtrangement from God, and under a ſence of this, to make earneſt inquiry after him; they never knew what it was to converſe with God, to have an intimate acquaintance with him; to be ſending out the breathings of their Souls after him, and to be unſatisfied without him? they took up a trade of lifeleſs duties, and that was all. As for the life and power of Religion, they never underſtood it: communion with God, they heard oft of, but never underſtood what it meant, they never ſavoured, and reliſhed the things of God, nor with any ſuitableneſs or complacency ingaged in his ſervice: And as for thoſe more ſecret actings of Religion, to take up the intereſt of God, to deſign his glory, to be deeply concerned for his honour, obſerving their affections, and the workings of their hearts in duty, to take notice of anſwers of prayers, or to look after their petitions, when they are out of their mouths, they know not what theſe things are. So that from hence it appears, that God, and they, were never really acquainted; no wonder then that they do forſake God, and are forſaken of him. The building might look neatly, and the houſe ſeem to be ſtrong; but becauſe it was built upon the ſands, it need not ſeem ſtrange, if it fall when the winds riſe, and the waves beat againſt it: but I ſay it, and ſay it again, the houſe that is built upon a rock will not, cannot fall: If a man be really united to God in Chriſt, and the

the work of Grace throughly wrought upon him, it is impoſſible that God ſhould forſake ſuch a one. God can't but be true though man be falſe, he can't but value the ſatisfaction and interceſſion of his Son, he can't forget his own nature, *Iſa.* 44. 15, 16. *Can a woman forget her ſucking Child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the Son of her Womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of thy hands: my wayes are continually before me, &c.* I do not ſay but that God may ſuſpend the refreſhing intimations of his love; nay, he may quite hide his face, and his deareſt ones may look upon themſelves as free among the dead, they may reckon themſelves ſuch as have no acquaintance with God, and yet for all this be exceeding dear to God; this is clear'd by every days experience. Nay, I may ſay, I believe that there are very few of them which know what Gods preſence, ſmiles, and love is, but know in ſome meaſure what it is to have his face hid, to walk in the dark, and ſee no light. It is no unuſual thing of a Child of God to queſtion his ſtate, to fear whether all that he ever did were not in hypocriſie and formality; have not the beſt been made ſometimes to queſtion (eſpecially upon ſome notable fall) whether what they did formerly did not proceed from meer common grace, or ſome leſs ſpiritual principle than the life of grace, and a divine nature within them. Were there ever any of the Sons of *Adam*, whom rich mercy hath plucked as Fire-brands out of the fire, to whom the Lord hath ſhewed his marvellous kindneſs, and love in Chriſt, that hath kept their watch ſo exactly that have walked ſo cloſely with God, ſo as ne-

ver to have the leaſt frown from him? were there ever any that lived all their days under a conſtant lively ſence of their intereſt in divine everlaſting love? If there be, they have fared better than *Job* did, they enjoyed more than ever *Heman* or *David* did. A Child of God may oft be in a ſad ſtate, but yet he is always in a ſafe ſtate: the purpoſe of God ſtands firm. Though for a ſmal moment he ſeem to forſake them, yet with everlaſting mercies will he gather them: O Everlaſting! That's a ſweet word indeed in the ſaints ear, he would not that one word ſhould have been out of the Bible, left out of the promiſe for a world, *Iſa.* 54, If thou beeſt once truly acquainted with God, thy ſtate is as ſafe, thy condition as ſure as if thou wer't already in Heaven. God may and will chaſtiſe his with rods, but his loving kindneſs he will never remove from them, his mercy indures for ever. All that God gives to his friends and acquaintance; that is ſpiritual, is like himſelf, Everlaſting. God is not lik ſhort-ſpirited man, every moment changing, one day doting upon an object, and the next day hating it as much. An earthly Prince may one moment ſet his Favorite at his Table, and the next command that he ſhould be hanged. But far be it from the unchangeable God, that he ſhould do thus. As for the great ones of the world, it hath been counted by ſome, and thoſe none of the weakeſt, no ſmall piece of policy, to keep out of their knowledge: their favours are ſo dearly bought, their kindneſs ſo uncertain, their diſpleaſure ſo dangerous, and yet ſo eaſily procured. But here it is far otherwiſe. It is God, and God alone that is an everlaſting Friend, in whoſe pre-

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ſence there is fulneſs of Joy, and Pleaſure for evermore. O theſe everlaſting things are great things! An everlaſting friend, an everlaſting inheritance, everlaſting glory, everlaſting joy, everlaſting life, and everlaſting death, they are matters of weight! O why ſhould not our very Souls be over-powred with the very thoughts of ſuch things! O this unbelief, this unbelief!

19. He is one that is willing and deſirous to be acquainted with you. What I have ſaid before had ſignified little to us, were it not for this. It's a miſery, and no comfort, to hear and know the great things which we muſt go without. But this is that which puts life into all thoſe powerful *Motives* which I handled before. God is the moſt loving, moſt ſtrong and rich Friend, and withall he hath in him a ſweet inclination to be acquainted with us. The tearms that he offers are the moſt reaſonable in the world. This, this is the comfort of the poor fallen Sons and Daughters of *Adam*; that though they have run away from God, though they have left their Fathers houſe, and turn'd Prodigals; yet their tenderhearted compaſſionate Father is ready to receive them again, his arms are open, he meets them, while they are yet a great way off, he runs to them and fals upon their neck and kiſſes them, and expreſſeth the greateſt kindneſs to them, and joy for their return. O unparalell'd love! O infinite goodneſs! God hath expreſſed this his willingneſs to receive poor loſt ſinners abundantly throughout all the ſcripture. If God had not been willing to have been friends again with man, what needed he to have given himſelf the

trouble of parting with his deareſt Son, and ſending him into the world to manage this great work of reconciling man to himſelf? why elſe was that precious blood ſhed? And to what purpoſe ſhould he ſend ſo many Prophets, Apoſtles, and Miniſters, for ſo many hundreds of years, riſing up early, and ſitting up late? why are they commanded to cry aloud, to uſe ſo much earneſtneſs, to compel poor wandering ſtrangers to come to his houſe, but that he might be acquainted with them? Can any one conceive that he ſhould do all this without the leaſt deſign of kindneſs? If all that God hath done to the reconciling man to himſelf, doth not ſpeak his willingneſs to be reconciled to them, what can? *Iſa.* 5. 4. Nay, ſo willing is he to receive them, notwithſtanding all their backſlidings, that he teacheth them how they may addreſs themſelves to him moſt acceptably, he puts words in their mouths which they may uſe with good ſucceſs when they come before him, *Hoſ.* 14.1,2,4. Nay, that ſinners may be the more confirmed in their expectation of his favour, he hath moſt ſolemnly ſworn, *That he delights not in the death of ſinners, but had rather that they ſhould return and live.* VVherefore elſe is it that we are ſo ſtraightly commanded, as we will anſwer the neglect upon our peril before God at that terrible day, that we preach the word in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon? To what purpoſe ſhould *Paul* expoſe himſelf to ſo many hazards both by Sea and Land? VVhy ſhould he teach this Doctrine of Reconciliation night and day with Tears? Doth he not tell you that he did all this by Divine Diſpenſation, and that it was as much as his Soul was worth to

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wave this work? And doth not all this ſpeak his willingneſs to be friends again with man? Could not God have ſent Legions of Angels with flaming Swords in their hands, when he ſent his Son, and thouſands of Prophets, Apoſtles, Miniſters and Teachers? Might he not have proclaimed war againſt them for ever, when he followed them with the Embaſſadors of Peace? If he had had no thoughts of Agreement with them, could he not have ſpoken to them in thunder and lightning, with fire and brimſtone, as well as in the ſtill voice of the Goſpel? He could if he had pleaſed have made them to have known the breach of his Covenant, by giving them up to the will of their cruel enemies. God could as eaſily have cut off a whole world of us, as we can cruſh a moth, and eaſier too. But he is willing to ſhew forth the riches of his patience and goodneſs, that thereby ſinners might be brought to Repentance. How doth God further expreſs his willingneſs to receive returning ſinners, by engaging them by many temporal favours? Who preſerved that tender creature in the Womb, and brought it out of thoſe dark Chambers into light? Who kept that helpleſs infant after it was in the world? Whoſe flax and wool do we wear upon our backs? To whom is it that we are beholding for every crumb we eat, and every drop we drink? who ſpreads our table for us and makes our cups to overflow? VVho brought us from the brink of the grave, when we had received the ſentence from our Doctor and our Diſeaſe? And what is the Language of all theſe mercies, *but return, O back-ſliding Sinner, for in me is thy help found.* Love, de-

light in, and be acquainted with him, from whom thou haſt received ſo many kindneſſes. If thou wouldeſt accept of him for thy Lord, Husband, and Friend, who hath ſent thee theſe tokens, thou ſhalt have other favours than theſe be. Is not this the meaning of all the common mercies that we daily receive from him? Why? was not thy breath ſtopt with an Oath in thy mouth? Why is it that ſo many thouſands that were born ſince thy ſelf, are gone to their eternal ſtate, when thou art ſtill ſtanding? What haſt thou done to engage God more than others, that Worms ſhould not be feeding on thee, when thou art feeding upon the fat and ſweet? What is the *Engliſh* of all this? what are all thoſe droves of mercies which God ſends to thee, but to cool thy enmity againſt him, and to make thee, who art marching out in thy warlike furniture, to meet him with tears of joy and friendly embraces? Is not, *Love the Giver*, written upon all his tokens? what means his frequent viſiting of thee but deſire of acquaintance with thee? Had he had no deſire at all to know you, and to be known of you, do you think he would have call'd ſo oft and ſo kindly at your door, would he have ſtood knocking with ſo much patience, and have ſpoke to you ſo lovingly if he deſired ſtill to be a ſtranger to you? Is this like one that deſires your ruine? Did God never plead with thee by his Miniſters, and urge the ſame Argument that I do now? Did you never hear ſuch kind of expoſtulations as theſe? Why wilt thou go on to deſpiſe thy God, and to refuſe his love? what reaſon haſt thou to harbour ſuch hard thoughts of him? doth he deſerve ſuch

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unkindneſs at your hands? How long ye ſimple ones will ye love ſimplicity? why will ye make light of that you can't poſſibly overvalue? the favour of God, and acquaintance with thy maker. How oft have you grieved his ſpirit by your unworthy contempts? how many times have you given him cauſe to complain of your unhandſome uſage, when he in very pity and compaſſion came to viſit you: He hath reaſon to ſay now, as well as of old, *Hear O Heavens, and give ear O Earth, for I have nouriſhed and brought up Children, and they have Rebelled againſt me*, Iſa. 1. 2. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh people and unwiſe? Is not he thy Father that bought thee? Hath he not made thee and eſtabliſhed thee?* Deut. 32.6. *O that they were wiſe. And be inſtructed O Jeruſalem, leſt my Soul depart from thee*, Jer. 6. 8. Is not this the voice of mercy! have not theſe been Expoſtulations of the mighty God with his Rebellious Creatures? and yet how do they ſtand it out all this while, as if God were like to get ſo much by their acquaintance? Return, O fooliſh ſinner, if thou makeſt any thing of Salvation and Damnation, if thou valueſt everlaſting glory, if thou thinkeſt the commands, threatnings, and promiſes of the almighty to be minded, come away and make no delay. O why wilt thou go on thus madly to undo thy ſelf? come away poor ſoul, for all this it is not yet quite to late, thy glaſs is not yet quite run, thy ſoul is not yet fully fixed in its unchangeable ſtate. Once more I make ſuch an offer to thee, as I am ſure none but a mad man will refuſe; ſuch an offer as none of the Kings and Lords of the world can make. The great & mighty Monarch of Heaven tenders thee an Alliance

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with himſelf; he ſees how far thou art ſpent, how poor and low thou haſt brought thy ſelf by a dangerous and long war againſt thy Maker; he foreſees what a condition thou wilt be in after a few more merry hours, except thou repent and turn. Wherefore in compaſſion to thy precious ſoul he hath commanded us to follow thee, and not to let thee be at quiet till thou haſt given us a promiſe, that thou wilt return and humble thy ſelf to thy God; and what, ſhall we ſtill loſe our labour! ſhall all this come to nothing! O prodigy of unkindneſs! O wonder of patience! thou haſt ſlighted the friendſhip of thy God, thou haſt ſet light by Chriſt, and undervalued Heaven and Eternity for ten, twenty, thirty years already, and yet the Lord ſends us once more in his name to ask you whether you are willing to have God for your Friend; God hath not yet ſaid, *Cut him down, bind him hand and foot, and caſt him into that lake that burns for ever. Bring thoſe mine enemies that would not that I ſhould reign over them, and ſlay them before my face.* God hath not yet ſpake that dreadful word, *Depart.* O what is it thou ſtayeſt for? What is it that makes this buſineſs to hang ſo long? what Lover is it that doth ſo long hold back thy heart? What is the matter that we can no more ſpeedily and effectually manage this great affair? what is it that thou doſt prefer before God? what is it that thou thinkeſt more worthy of thy warmeſt love than Chriſt? What is that great thing that thou ſtickeſt not to venture thy ſoul for? Act like a man that is rational and not beſide himſelf. If the World be God, if Earth be better than Chriſt, then chooſe that; if Chriſt be God, then chooſe him. How long will

will you ſtand halting between two? love that which will laſt longeſt, be acquainted with him that is willing and able to do moſt for thee. Is the world worth more now than it was in *Davids* time, when he preferred the favour of God before thouſands of Gold and Silver? Is the price of it raiſed? Can it bribe death, and ſtop the mouth of Divine Juſtice, and procure thee a real reſpect in another world? Go chaffer and ſee what bargain thou canſt make; tell God that thou wilt give him thouſands for thy brothers life, and as much more for the lengthning the leaſe of thy own to Eternity. What doth God ſay? is the bargain made? is it not enough? why, add a world to it, will that do? If it will not do this, if this purchaſe be too great for thy purſe, then go lower, can all thou haſt keep thee from fears, get thee a ſtomach, procure thee eaſe, rectifie thy conſtitution; will it do this, or will it not? if not, why ſhoudſt thou value that which can do ſo little for thee, before that which can do all things for thee? Be perſwaded at laſt to be wiſe. VVhat is God like to get by your love, or loſe by your hatred? what have you to boaſt of? what excellencies to ſet you out? what portion to advance you, that you ſtand thus upon your tearms? Come, let's hear a little what it is thou thinkeſt ſo highly of thy ſelf for. I am ſure your over-great beauty can't commend you; for a Black-more may with better reaſon brag of comelineſs, than ſuch a deformed loathſome creature can of beauty. I am ſure your helpfulneſs will not ſpeak for you; for thou art a crazy, decrepid, ſickly creature, that will coſt God more to cure thee, than thou art worth a thouſand

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times. It can't be for thy Eſtate that thou art ſo much deſired, for all thy Gold is adulterate, thy Jewels counterfeit, thy All forfeited; and what is it then that thou haſt yet to boaſt of? come and ſet it before us, that we may acknowledge our miſtakes. Are the Cloaths upon thy back (as fine as thou art) thy own? is the Food that thou eateſt paid for? And is this the Creature that muſt be wooed with ſo much earneſtneſs? Behold all ye Inhabitants of the world, and admire! hear, O Heavens! this is that----- (I want a name to call her by) which thinks it below her to be match't to Chriſt, and an undervaluing to be acquainted with her Maker, and a ſhame to have God for her Father? From the crown of the head to the ſole of the foot there is nothing but wounds and bruiſes, and putrified ſores; and running plgue-ſores that are broken, are her greateſt beauty: and her's a thing to be lov'd with all my heart! *Ezek.* 16. Whoſoever thou art that readeſt theſe lines, this was once thy condition, in theſe ornaments he found thee, when God came to ask thy heart, this was thy dreſs, though thou art thus highly advanced. And ſuch were ſome of you, but ye are waſhed, but ye are cleanſed.

And after all this, O Sinner, art thou ſtill as ſtout and proud as ever! Is Chriſt ſo willing to bring thee to his Father? is he willing to Cloath thee from head to foot with glorious Robes, ſuch a dreſs as may become thee in the preſence of a King? Doth he offer to lead thee in his hands to his own Palace? Is God ſo willing and deſirous to be your Father, and Chriſt to be your Husband? are all the Miniſters of Chriſt ſo willing to do their utmoſt to bring this match to protection?

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ſhall they lie at you day and night to give your conſent, and to be willing; and are you ſtill unwilling? Well, if all this ſignifie little, and you miſs of Chriſt at laſt, and be not acquainted with God; after all, remember it was your own doings: and that you thought it greater wiſdom to marry the Servant than the Maſter, to obey the Rebel rather than your loving Prince. Remember you preferred Darkneſs before Light, Hell before Heaven. I call Heaven and Earth to Record this day, that I have ſet Life and Death before you, and you ſtand as if it were ſo difficult a matter to reſolve which were the beſt. This ſounds ſtrangely, and every one will be ready to write *Fool* upon that mans forehead that acts thus: Hold man, be not too ready to paſs thy cenſure before thou look within thee. Doſt thou ſee an abſolute need of Chriſt? Doſt thou adore his infinite love and kindneſs? Doſt thou give up thy ſelf to him for thy Lord, and receive him for better for worſe, come on it what will? Or doſt thou not rather ſpend thy thoughts, and let out thy affections upon the vanities and pleaſures of the world? Doſt thou not love Father and Mother, Wife and Children, Brethren and Siſters, Houſe and Lands more than him? Why, if this be thy caſe, I muſt ſay thou art one of the Fools that loves Death and hateſt Life, thou calleſt that folly in another, which in thy ſelf thou counteſt wiſdom. I wonder who it is that you ſtrive to pleaſe all this while! Is not the hand of *Joab* in all this? hath not Satan been deep in retarding this match? hath not he a deſign to marry thee to ſome painted Luſt, though he undoe thee for ever? and muſt he be pleaſed rather than

God?

Is it more neceſſary to gratifie him that never yet intended to do any of the Sons of *Adam* any kindneſs, rather than their beſt friends? Come away for ſhame, and let us loſe our breath no longer; and let that time we ſpend in pleading with you for God, be ſpent in ſinging with you, and praiſing God for you, and congratulating your happy acquaintance with God and you, matching to his only Son.

20. But becauſe man is ſo wedded to the world, and dotes upon his luſt, that all the arguments that we can uſe, are moſt commonly unſucceſſeful, I ſhall add one more upon this ſort of motives drawn from the qualifications of him whom I would fain have you acquainted with, and that ſhall take in all that can be ſaid on this head, and that is this; Conſider that he is altogether lovely, he is made up of love, goodneſs, and all excellencies; and whatſoever pleaſure, delight and content you find in the Creature, it is tranſcendently in him, he is the cheifeſt of ten thouſands: ask of them that by Faith have ſeen him, inquire of the Spouſe in the *Canticles*, and ask her what is her beloved more than another beloved? what there is in God and Chriſt more than in the world, and ſhe will almoſt wonder, that any one that is rational ſhould ask ſo fooliſh a queſtion; ſhe thinks you might with as much judgment and reaſon have ask'd, what there is in Heaven, more deſirable than in Hell? VVhat is there is in eaſe more than in torments? in Gold and Jewels, more than in droſs; in a living, healthful, beautiful Creature, more than in a ſtinking rotten carcaſe? Did you but ſee his face, you would ſoon think there were ſomething in him

him more than in another; could you but ſee his eye, your heart would be in a flame: did you but underſtand what it is to be brought into his banqueting-houſe, you would ſay that they are neither fools nor mad-men, that can find in their hearts to ſcorn the beauties and glories of this world in compariſon of one look or ſmile from God; and believe that his love was better than wine, to be preferred infinitely before the greateſt worldly pleaſures, and think that the Virgins had reaſon enough to love him, *Cant.* 1. 4. How high doth the Church run in his commendations? How doth ſhe endeavour to ſet him out to the life, that every one may admire his excellencies, and be taken with his beauties as well as her ſelf; neither doth ſhe fear to loſe him by this, nor indeed is unwilling that others ſhould fall in love with him as well as ſhe, *Cant.* 5. 9, 10. *&c.* She begins firſt with his Face, it is white and ruddy, the moſt exact beauty, ſo that ſhe muſt be blind that is not taken with him, and ſo ſhe goes on as well as ſhe can to ſet him out; but he is ſo infinitely above her commendations, that ſhe wants words to expreſs her ſelf, therefore ſhe ſpeaks one great one, *He is altogether lovely*; and if you will not believe, come and ſee. Do but look upon him by Faith and meditation, contemplate his beauties, and then if you have any thing yet to object, if after you have had a true ſight of him, and have well weighed all, you do not find that there is in him, infinitly more than I can tell you, why then let me bear the blame for ever.

Well, now let us gather up all theſe things together; and if a multitude of arguments, and if weight and reaſon, if vehemency and earneſtneſs

may

may prevail; I ſhould have ſome good hopes that I ſhould not want ſucceſs in this work, nor you of the acquaintance with God, and everlaſting glory. Therefore I ſay again, if kindneſs and love be taking, who ſo ſweet and obliging as he? If comfort, joy and pleaſure be deſirable, who is there, when the Soul is ſurrounded with a multitude of perplexities that can ſo much delight, refreſh and raiſe it? If Power, Glory and Majeſty, if ability to defend from injuries, and revenge wrongs, might ſignifie any thing with poor ſhiftleſs Creatures; who is there that ever yet prevailed againſt him? Who ever contended with God and proſpered? If vigour, activity and care in all the affairs of his friends, can intice the dull helpleſs ſinner to receive him; who will take more care for, and do more for them than he? If his humility may engage us, if freedom of acceſs, notwithſtanding that infinite diſtance that is between us and him, ſignifie any thing as to the commending of him to our acquaintance; where can a poor beggar be more welcome than at the houſe of this mighty Prince? Can Faithfulneſs in the greateſt ſtraight raiſe the eſteem of a friend? who ever yet truſted him that was deceived? Are riches and wealth taking? Who is there that can give a Kingdom for a portion, a love-token, and give everlaſting glory, and Heaven for a joynture, but God? Doth pity in miſery, ſimpathy in ſuffering, compaſſion in diſtreſs, indear and commend a friend, who is more tender-hearted than he? Are Honours and preferments ſuch great things? Who is that which will make all his favourites Kings and Prieſts, and ſet them upon Thrones, and reward, and commend

them

them before the whole World? is ſuitableneſs a conſiderable qualification to make up this match? who ſo ſuitable for the ſoul, a ſpirit, as God a ſpirit? Who can ſatisfie it's vaſt and infinite deſires, but infinity it ſelf? Have poor ſimple Creatures that have quite undone themſelves by their folly and indiſcretion need of a wiſe Counſellor to wind them out of their ſad intricacies? who is there among the profound Politicians and grave ſages of the world to be compared unto him? Doth a dying man that hath a never-dying ſoul, that is to paſs ſpeedily into an eternal ſtate, lack an ever-dying and immortal Friend, that may ſtand him in ſome ſteed, when all his Relations are dead and rotten? is not God immortal? Are not friends ſometimes furtheſt off from one, when one hath moſt need of them? Is not he then a friend highly to be prized, who can, who will never be abſent? Doth not God fill Heaven and Earth? VVhat think you of a ſoul-friend? Is not ſuch a one worth the looking after, who takes care that your ſoul to be ſure, ſhall not miſcarry? who ever did more for ſouls than Chriſt? will it not be true prudence to make ſure of ſuch a friend as we muſt have for our friend, or we are miſerable for ever? and where is ſuch a one to be found, but he that hath the keys of Heaven and Hell? which is moſt conſiderable, Time or Eternity? and whom ſhall I moſt value, him that promiſeth preſent Pleaſures that are loſt as ſoon as felt, or him that will beſtow everlaſting favours? and are there not at Gods right hand pleaſures for evermore? If the trial & experience of ſo many millions may ſpeak his commendation, will not all that ever knew

God ſay; truly God is good to *Iſrael*. Will Gods willingneſs, deſire, and earneſtneſs prevail vvith you to come to him? What is the ſubſtance of the whole Bible? Doth not almoſt every Chapter ſpeak the deſire that God hath to be reconciled to man? if the perfection of all excellencies meeting in one can render him amiable; how can he be ſlighted, who is altogether lovely; And what ſay you now, are you reſolved, or are you not? Shall the infinite Majeſty of Heaven condeſcend to offer himſelf to be loved and imbraced by ſinful duſt? ſhall God ſay, I will be thy Father? and ſhall not the ſinner ſay, I will be thy Child? Why ſhould not the heart of every Apoſtate rebellious Traytor, that hath forfeited Eſtate, Life and Soul, leap at ſuch good news, and ſay, will God for all this lay aſide the controverſy, and conclude a Peace? Will he receive the Rebel to Mercy? will he open his Doors to his Prodigal? And is there yet any hope? Is it poſſible that ſuch ſins as mine ſhould be forgiven? Can it be conceived that ſuch a Creature as I ſhould be imbraced? what look upon me, will God indeed take me into favour? Yes, thee, behold he calls thee, he offers thee his Son, a Kingdom, a Crown; behold the Father meets, he makes haſt to meet his returning Prodigal; Behold the King hath ſent to invite thee to the Feaſt: nay, he will give thee his only Son in Marriage, the wedding garment is made ready, the Bridegroom is coming, the wheels of his Chariot run apace, the friends of the Bridegroom are come to bid you make ready: up, deck your ſelf, put on your glorious Apparel, make haſt, make haſt ye Virgins, your companions are ready, all ſtay for you

you, the Bridegroom is at the Door: Behold he is at the door, and will you ſtill let him to knock, VVhat! Father, Husband, a Kingdom? what words are theſe? VVilt thou O mighty *Jehovah* be my Father? VVilt thou O bleſſed *Jeſus* be my Husband? ſhall I have a Kingdome? what, me a Child, a ſpouſe for the King of Glory, an Heir of glory! Grace! Grace! *Amen Hallelujah.* Be it to thy ſervants according to thy VVord! but who are we, and what is our fathers houſe, that thou haſt brought us hitherto? and now O Lord God, what ſhall thy ſervant ſay unto thee? for we are ſilenced with VVonder, and muſt ſit down with Aſtoniſhment, for we cannot utter the leaſt tittle of thy Praiſes? What meaneth the heighth of this ſtrange love? O that the God of Heaven and Earth ſhould condeſcend to enter into Covenant with his Duſt, and to take into his Boſom the viperous Brood, that have often ſpit their venome in his Face! We are not worthy to be as the handmaids to waſh the feet of the ſervants of our Lord? How much leſs to be thy Sons and Heirs, and to be made partakers of all thoſe bleſſed Liberties and Priviledges which thou haſt ſetled upon us; but for thy goodneſs ſake, and according to thy own heart, haſt thou done all theſe great things. *Even ſo Father, becauſe ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight. Wherefore thou art great. O God, for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beſides thee, and what Nation on Earth is like thy people, whom God went to Redeem for a people to himſelf and to make him a Name, and to do for them great things and Terrible? For thou haſt confirmed them to thy ſelf, to be a People unto thee for ever, and thou Lord, art become their God. Wonder,*

O Heavens, and be moved, O Earth, at this great thing! For, behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they ſhall be his people, and God himſelf ſhall be with them, and be their God. Be aſtoniſhed and raviſhed with wonder, for the infinite breach is made up, the offender is received, and God and man are reconciled, and a Covenant of Peace entred, and Heaven and Earth are agreed upon the tearms, and have ſtruck their hands, and ſealed the Indentures. O happy concluſion! O bleſſed Conjunction! Shall the Stars dwell with the duſt? Or the wide diſtant Poles be brought to mutual embraces and cohabitation? But here the diſtance of the tearms is infinitely greater, *Rejoyce O Angels! ſhout Seraphims!* O all the friends of the Bridegroom and Bride, prepare an *Epithalamium*, be ready with the marriage-Song. Lo, here is the wonder of wonders! for *Jehovah* hath betrothed himſelf for ever to his hopeleſs Captives, and owns the marriage before all the world, and is become one with us, and we with him; he hath bequeathed to us the precious things of the earth beneath, with the fulneſs thereof, and hath kept back nothing from us. And now, O Lord, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou haſt promiſed this goodneſs unto thy ſervants, and haſt left us nothing to ask at thy hands, but what thou haſt already freely granted. Only the word which thou haſt ſpoken concerning thy ſervants, eſtabliſh it for ever, and do as thou haſt ſaid, and let thy Name be magnified for ever, ſaying, *The Lord of Hoſt he is the God of Iſrael. Amen. Hallelujah.* And how do you like this Muſick, O ye the loſt Sons and Daughters of *Adam*? how do you reliſh

theſe

theſe Dainties? what do you think of this match? Some you ſee have been ſo wiſe, as with the greateſt gratitude they can for their ſouls, to cloſe with thoſe hapy offers of grace. You hear how bravely ſuch and ſuch have beſtowed themſelves, and now they are made for ever. And what do you ſay to the ſame propoſals? have they ſo much reaſon to bleſs the day that ever ſuch a motion was made? have they cauſe to rejoyce for ever for thoſe bleſſed overtures, or are they all to be ſlighted by you? will Chriſt be worſe to you than them? is Heaven and happineſs leſs neceſſary for you than them? will the loſs of a Soul be more inconſiderable to you, than it would have been to them? Will not Heaven, Chriſt and Glory be as well worth your acceptance as theirs? What, are you willing to be ſhut out when the Bridegroom comes to fetch his Spouſe home; Can you bear it, to ſee ſuch, as you thought your inferiours, advanced, and your ſelf deſpiſed? What ſhall I ſay? what words ſhall I uſe? what ſhall I do to prevail? O that I could pitty you a thouſand times more than I do! O that my eyes might weep in ſecret for thy folly! O that you alſo might do as ſome have done before you? though indeed they be but few that be ſo wiſe! O that you would alſo beſtow your heart upon Chriſt! give him your heart-love; or he will have your heart-blood. Do not make your ſelf miſerable to pleaſe any living: do not ſlight Chriſt, becauſe moſt do ſo; go not with them to Hell for company. But that, if it be poſſible, I might perſwade you, I ſhall add ſome more motives, to prevaile with you to get acquainted with God; which I am certain will either work that

bleſſed

bleſſed effect, or riſe up againſt you to the aggravation of your confuſion, in that great and terrible Day.

II. HEAD OF MOTIVES.

The next Head of Motives which I ſhall inſiſt upon, for the inforcing of this Duty of acquainting your ſelves with God, I ſhall take from the glorious effect of this acquaintance with God.

1. The firſt effect of this acquaintance with God is, it makes the ſoul humble, and conſequently fits the ſoul for greater Communications from God ſtill, and to do God the greater ſervice; but of that particular afterwards. Acquaintance with God, it makes the ſoul humble. When God comes into the Soul, he brings ſuch a glorious light along with him, that he makes the Soul to ſee, not only his beauty, buts its own deformity. *Pſal.* 119. 130. *The entrance of thy word giveth Light: It giveth underſtanding to the ſimple.* Before the Soul was acquainted with the word of God, and by that had ſome diſcoveries of God made to it out of the word, why it was in the dark, and ſaw nothing at all of its own vileneſs, it took no notice of that Sink, that Hell that was within it, conſider not its own Treaſon againſt the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and the dangerous hazards that it did run every moment upon that account; but the Soul thought very well of its own ſtate, it flattered it ſelf in its own iniquity, the man thinks he is rich and increaſed in goods, and hath need of nothing, but when he comes to look into his Purſe, to open his

Trea-

Treaſury, and to tell over all his Gold and Silver in the light, why then he perceives a ſad miſtake: All his ſilver is Droſſie, and the beſt Riches that he hath is but Dung: When the light comes in, he ſees the darkneſs of his Underſtanding, the perverſneſs of his will, the diſorderlineſs of his Affections, the diſtemper of the whole ſoul. He before took himſelf for a beautiful Creature, but by his light and this glaſs he ſees his beauty is great deformity, he beholds heaps of Luſts crawling up and down, which before lay undiſcerned, and then that man that reckoned himſelf ſo cries out, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me? what ſhall I do to be ſaved?* I am undon, undon, how ſhall I live, where ſhall I dwell for ever? Time vvas that the man admired vvhat the Miniſter ailed to keep ſuch a ſtir about ſin, but now he vvonders that they are no more earneſt in their Preaching of it down. It was a little vvhile ago, that he thought himſelf vvhole, but now he feels himſelf ſick to the very heart, vvounded, fainting and ready to die; he made full account that he vvas pure, but now he cries out unclean, unclean; it vvas not long ſince he ſaid vvith indignation, am I blind alſo? But novv he cries out, and vvill not be ſilenced, have mercy upon me *Jeſus*, thou Son of *David*, and grant that I may receive my Sight. His language is much altered; he can now ſay, vvas ever ſuch a ſinner as I pardoned? Will ſuch a prodigal ever be received? ſhall ſuch foul offences as mine be forgiven? if God ſhould look upon me, and give me a Chriſt, and pitty me, and caſt his skirts over me, while I lie in my Blood; if the Lord ſhould look upon me, it would be ſuch a wonder

that all that ever heard of it may juſtly admire. Now the man which thought himſelf the beſt of Saints, believes himſelf as bad as the worſt of ſinners! When a man begins to be acquainted with God, he begins alſo to know himſelf; He that ſaw no need of waſhing by Chriſt, would now have hands, feet, head and heart all waſht. He that thought himſelf ſometimes far enough from Hell, now begins to admire that he did not fall into it, and although there be a ſweet alteration in him for the better, and Saints begin to delight very much in him, yet he wonders that any one ſhould ſee any thing in him, that ſhould cauſe any affection in them towards him, much more to inflame their hearts in ſuch vehement love to him; if he hear of any reproaches that are caſt upon him, he is ready to ſay with that wiſe Stoick (*Epict.*) *If he had known me better, he would have ſpoke much worſe of me. If any praiſe him, he judgeth that it proceeds from their ignorance of his weakneſs, rather than from any knowledge of his worth; and if he hear any ſuch language, he is ready to tremble for fear of his own heart, and cries out, not unto me, not unto me, but unto his name be the praiſe: yet not I, but Chriſt which dwelleth in me.* Thus it is with one that begins to have ſome ſaving knowledg of God; and the nearer he comes to God, the further he goes from himſelf; the more he ſees of him and his righteouſneſs, the leſs he ſees of his own; the more he is exalted, the more he debaſeth himſelf; like thoſe four & twenty Elders, he lays his Crown at the feet of God. Thus it was with *Job*, when God; as I may ſo ſay, ſtood at a greater diſtance from him; he is ready to ſpeak a little too highly, he ſtands much upon his

his own righteouſneſs, he ſtifly juſtifieth himſelf; but when the holy God comes a little nearer to him, when he throws off that dark cloud with which he had mantled himſelf, and when he cauſed that glorious brightneſs to break forth upon *Job*, and made him to ſee a glance of his Holineſs, Wiſdom and Juſtice, then how is he even aſhamed and confounded within himſelf, that he ſhould ever ſtand ſo much upon his own juſtification, *Job* 42.5,6. *I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye ſeeth thee. Wherefore I abhor my ſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.* When he comes to be better acquainted with God, how ſtrangely is his note changed; and I might ſay, when he was thus abaſed; how ſpeedily doth God raiſe him to a wonder! A man may hear of God twenty years together, & yet never abhor himſelf with duſt and aſhes, never ſee any vileneſs that is in his nature, never be brought off from his own righteouſneſs, never admire that he is kept out of hell! O but when he comes to ſee God, and to be acquainted with him, how doth he cry out of himſelf as unworthy to breath in the air, as deſerving nothing but wrath; then he hath not a word to ſay for the goodneſs of his own heart, now he can ſay with aſtoniſhment! O infinite patience! O unmeaſureable goodneſs! O the depths of Gods love! He muſt be merciful indeed that can pardon ſuch ſins! That muſt be goodneſs indeed that can be ſo to me! That is love with a witneſs, that can imbrace ſuch a loathſome monſter! What was it that made *Abraham* call himſelf duſt and aſhes? What made *David* to ſay he was a worm and no man? What made *Iſaiah* ſpeak ſo debaſingly of himſelf; why theſe were the friends

Friends of God, they had visions of that holy One. When is it that the people of God are most ingenuous in their confessions? when do they most freely pour out their souls before God? when is it that they most readily open their sores and desire that they should be searched, but when this great Chyrurgion comes to their chambers? These which before were whole, are now sick, full of plague-Sores, head and heart sick, dangerously sick, and no whole part in them, they can say more against themselves now than ever the Minister could; they can aggravate their sins, and lay loads upon themselves; and they see themselves vile, and even are ready to wonder that the Earth did not open and swallow them up before this, they admire that God should indure them so long, and think it no small Miracle that they were not crushed in the Egge, that they were not cast from the darkness of the Womb, to the darkness of Hell. Now they can cry out of Original Sin, and the indisposition of their souls to any thing that is good, and inclination to that which is bad: They say as well as *David*, *That they were born in sin, and in iniquity did their Mother conceive them*; They think every thing too good for them, all mercy on this side everlasting Misery. They count every bit they eat, and every drop they drink more than they deserve. They think themselves unworthy of the least of Gods Mercies. *Gen.* 32. 10. Others say thanksgivings, but he feels them; others say confessions, but he feels them. It is one thing for a man to speak of his own unworthiness, and another thing to lie under the sense of it. The heart and Tongue are two distinct Members. The Heart

may

may ſpeak that which the tongue can't utter, and the tongue may utter that which the heart never felt. But a man that is brought into acquaintance with God, ſpeaks what he experiences, or rather his experience is greater than he ſpeaks, ſo that he doth not diſſemble with God, when he confeſſeth his ſin before him. They lay themſelves as low as Hell; this is humility, and this an effect of acquaintance with God. Hence it is that *Paul* ſaith of himſelf, *Eph.* 3. 8. *Unto me who am leſs than the leaſt of all Saints is this grace given, that I ſhould Preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt; and to make all men ſee what is the fellowſhip, &c.* He wants words to expreſs Gods greatneſs, and his own ſmalneſs. Now, what was it that made *Paul* ſpeak and think thus of himſelf? There was a time when *Paul* would have ſpit in any ones face that ſhould have ſpoke as much againſt him, as he did againſt himſelf. What is it that hath wrought ſuch a ſtrange alteration in this great *Rabbi*, and made him ſo little? Why, this acquaintance with God, the ſight of Chriſt was the thing that laid this proud Phariſee in the duſt, and made him blind alſo. Mark this, always the more heavenly any Man is, the more humble, ſee *Exod.* 3. 11. 2 *Sam.* 7. 18. If I ſhould appeal to the experiences of Saints and ask them, when they had the loweſt thoughts of themſelves, would they not ſay, when they were neareſt God? Now, would you walk humbly, you muſt walk with your God; would you ſee more of your own deformity; why then you muſt labour to ſee more of his Holineſs, more of his beauty. Contraries ſet neer one another, appear more viſible.

2. Another excellent effect of Acquaintance with God, is, that it will make a man fall upon ſin in good earneſt. When the ſoul ſees how infinitely good God is, it can't but ſee an unſpeakable evil in ſin, which is ſo directly conntrary to him. When the ſoul hath really entred into a League with God, it preſently bids defiance to all his enemies; when he begins to be at peace with God, he preſently commenceth a war againſt his adverſaries. Friendſhip with God makes enmity againſt Satan. That which formerly the man rolled under his tongue as a ſweet morſel, is now like gall and wormwood to him. He that ſomtimes did commit iniquity with greedineſs, can now ſay, that it is the greateſt folly and madneſs in the world; he knows that it is an evil and a bitter thing, as ſweet as it taſted when his palate was diſtempered; he that gloried in his wickedneſs, now accounts it the greateſt ſhame in the world; and hateſt the garments which are beſpotted with the fleſh, which ſometimes he took for beautiful raiments. The burnt child dreads the fire; ſin hath coſt his friend dear, and him dear too. The child can't love that knife which ſtabb'd his Father. He knows how ſweet God is, and how much he hates ſin, and that if he would have Gods company, he muſt bid an everlaſting farewel to his deereſt beloved ſin; and therefore rather than he will offend ſo dear a friend, he will hew *Agag* in pieces before the Lord. He will as ſoon cut off one hand with the other, and be pull'd limb from limb, as again draw his ſword againſt his covenanted friend, and again venture into the field in the cauſe that ſometimes he did ſo deeply engage body and ſoul in.

in. He that thought before that it was no great matter to Damn, Curſe, and Tear; but a trick of youth to Whore, and no harm to do what one had a mind to; to Eat and Drink, and Talk, and ſleep as one Liſts, to give ones Luſts whatſoever it call'd for; he that could once make a mock of ſin, and Sleep ſecurely upon the top of a maſt, and thought it a piece of Gallantry to dare the Almighty, and was ready to laugh at them which durſt not be ſo Prodigal of their Souls, as himſelf; the caſe is now wonderful altered with him, he now ſees the Harlot ſtript naked, he beholds how lothſome the Whore is now her Paint is waſhed off, ſin and hell are alike to him; tempt him to folly, and he will ſoon anſwer in *Joſephs* language, *How ſhall I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* He that ſometimes thought ſin the only pleaſure, and looked upon the Devil and the world as the only Friends, now ſees his dangerous miſtake, and bleſſeth God that his Eyes are opened before he comes into another world; he knows how that holineſs is the only pleaſure, and God is the only Friend, and ſin and the world are as mortal Enemies as the Devil himſelf; he believes that if he venture upon ſin, he muſt venture upon the diſpleaſure of his Friend, whoſe favour he ſets more ſtore by than all the delights under Heaven, and whoſe loving kindneſs he judgeth to be better than life it ſelf. When the Soul is once acquainted with God, how ſtrangely are its apprehenſions of things altered? Now he calls Things and Perſons by their right Name; good he calls Good, and evil Evil, whereas before he called evil good, and good evil,

evil, and put light for darkneſs, and darkneſs for Light; he now believes that the zealous compaſſionate Miniſters that ſpoke ſo much againſt ſin, had reaſon enough to have ſaid ten times as much as they did; he ſees that it was not for nothing that they were ſo earneſt with him; he hath taſted the Gall, Wormwood, and poiſon that is in ſin; he plainly ſees what is the great Makebate between God and Man, he hath now the wit to underſtand what it is that hath kept good things ſo long from him: Tell him now of a Revel, a Whore, he had as live thou ſhouldſt perſwade him to part with his ſtrength and liberty and grind in a Mill, he reckons you might as rationally, deſire him to leap into a bottomleſs Pit, to take up his everlaſting lodging in a bed of Flames, and to make light of Damnation. Let Men and Devils uſe what Arguments they will to prevail with him, now to cloſe with temptations, he is ſure he hath a ſtronger againſt them, he hath a ſenſible Argument within, which will anſwer all, if they had ten thouſand times as many more than they can produce: The love of Chriſt makes him abhor the motion; God is my Friend, daſhes all. Shall ſuch a one as I take up Arms againſt God? ſhall I that have found him ſo infinitely good? ſhall I that have experienced the faithfulneſs of this Friend to me, be ſo infinitely ungrateful as to be thus abominably unfaithful to him? Shall I that have forfeited my Life and ſoul, and inſtead of Hell have received Heaven, inſtead of Damnation, Salvation, ſhall I inſtead of thankfulneſs again rebel? becauſe the Grace of God abounds, ſhall ſin abound? God forbid. To argue from mercy to ſin is the Devils

his logick, To argue from mercy to duty is true Christianity: One that is acquainted with God, can expostulate the case with his own Soul, and say! What meanest thou O my Soul to stand parlying with Satan? hast thou known what that hath cost thee already? look back to *Eden*. Who was it that dispossessed thy Grand-Father of that brave seat? What did *Eve* get by discoursing with such a Cheater; have you not lost enough already, but you must be venturing still? was it nothing for God of a friend to become a stranger & Enemy? was it a slight matter to be divested of all that glory that once thou didst shine in, but that now again after thou art brought into some favour, thou must be tampering with that gamester who had like to have robbed thee of all? art thou talking of returning again into *Egypt*? what, hast thou so soon forgotten the Iron, and the Clay? Is this all the thanks that you give the Lord for his unspeakable mercy? Doth he that hath done such things for you deserve no better at your hands? Is this your kindness to your friend? What was it O my soul that that undone Creature said unto thee? Did he say, it is a little one, and thy Soul shall live? what did he ask a few merry houres that I should spare my self, that I should not be righteous overmuch? Did he so? A special Friend! I thank you for nothing? and why didst thou not answer the Tempter, as *Solomon* did *Bathsheba* when she ask'd a small thing (as she thought) for *Adonijah*? and why dost thou not ask the Kingdom also? and why did not Satan ask thee to part with Heaven, and thy interest in Christ, and those Favours? as the Lord liveth, as small a request as thou thinkst his was

that

that word was ſpoken againſt thy life, thy ſoul, *A vertuous Man*, or as the Stoick calls him, (*Anton.*) *One that hath God for his Friend, when Temptations are preſented, he remembers who he is, and how he ſtands related to God, and how little grateful ſuch an action would be to his Friend.* And thus he doth reſiſt the Temptation with a great deal of gallantry, when he remembers himſelf. Nay, ſometimes, Temptations to ſin do make Grace more to abound? the water which was intended to cool divne Love, proves Oyl, and makes that noble flame to burn more vehement ly, *Cant.* 8.6,7. He deſires to exerciſe that Grace which is contrary to the vice which he is tempted to with more than ordinary vigour. He ſtands like a Rock in the midſt of the ſea unſhaken; he is ſteadfaſt and unmoveable, like a pillar in the Temple of his God. He is much of the ſame mind, in that point, with that brave Heathen, who ſpake thus to himſelf when Temptation was ſtrong. (*Ar. Epict.* 1. 2. *c.* 18.) *Deliberate man, yield not raſhly, 'tis a great work that lies upon thy hands, 'tis a divine work, 'tis for a Kingdom, the Kingdom of God.* Now remember thy God, lets ſee what thy love to thy God is, remember his preſence, he beholds how thou ſtandeſt deliberating whether thou ſhouldeſt fight for him or againſt him, for ſhame ſhew not thy ſelf ſo baſely diſingenious: Remember what **thy God,** thy Friend did for thee at ſuch and ſuch a time: Remember how kindly you were entertained by him the laſt time you were at his Houſe. Whoſe ſword 'tis that you wear by your ſide? who gave you it? did not God give it you to fight againſt his enemies? and will you draw it againſt himſelf? remember from whence you had all

that

that you do enjoy, and can you find in your heart to take Gods mercies, Gold, Silver, and Food, and beſtow them all upon that which he hates? will you quarter & keep in pay with Gods coyn, his greateſt enemy? And if you feel your heart ſtill ſtaggering, and ſcarce able to keep it's ground, then remember God ſtands by, Chriſt looks on, and ſees how gallantly any Champion of his vvill demean themſelves on his quarrel; & that there is not a more lovely ſight upon the Earth, than to behold one of his Friends, rather venturing their lives than they will bear that the leaſt indignity or affront ſhould be put upon their God! O happy are they that can always act as in the ſight of God! and if the Soul can have but a conſtant freſh ſence of it's relation to God, and his eye, it is impoſſible but that it ſhould hate ſin, which is ſo directly oppoſite to him: happy are thoſe vvho by the thoughts of God are inraged againſt ſin! Is it not enough ſaih that heavenly Soul that is acquainted vvith God, that I have done ſuch and ſuch things againſt God, when I knew him not, but that I ſhould again ingage againſt him after I have been obliged by a thouſand mercies, after I have taſted and ſeen how good the Lord is? is it a light matter that I did ſo long fight againſt him then? and ſhall I now renew my rebellions, vvhen I have had ſo much experience of the folly & madneſs of ſuch a war, where I ſhall be as ſurely conquered as I draw my ſword? and hath God kept me by a miracle of mercy out of Hell, and after I had run out ſo vvretchedly, and undone my ſelf, ſet me up again, after I had plaid the prodigal, received me again into favour, and ſhall I after all deal thus

baſely by him: No I'le die a thouſand deaths before I will willingly yield to any thing that may be in the leaſt offenſive to him, whom my Soul hath ſuch an infinite reaſon to love above the vvhole world. The knowledge of Gods ſervice, and Satans too, makes a Soul to diſtinguiſh; he that knows what it is to be made free by Chriſt abhors his old Maſter, he remembers full well the great hardſhip that he then underwent, when he had nothing to live upon but Husks, he calls to mind the Clay and Morter, he can't forget the cruel vaſſalage that he ſerved under; Garlick and Onions were his dainties, and truly he can't deſire to leave his Manna for ſuch kind of Food; he is not in love with the Whip and Scourge, he doth not dote upon the fetters, the Iron vvhich went into his Soul, but he is glad with all his heart to be free from thoſe Task-maſters, which made him to ſerve with rigour, he hath no mind to return to his old Work: My meaning in all this is, he that was a ſervant and a drudg of Satans, and a ſlave to his luſt, when he once comes to taſte the ſweetneſs of Spiritual liberty, to be made free by Chriſt, he hath no deſire again to be inſlaved, but doth with the greateſt deteſtation, reject all the propoſals and promiſes that the Devil makes, to bring this buſineſs about; he knows Satan too well to love his ſervice, he remembers that all his pay was promiſes and no more, he remembers that he fed him vvith poyſon, and made him do that which had like to break his bones, and undone him for ever; he ſees what Satans deſigns were, and what had become of him quickly, if he had gone on in his ſervice; he believes chains to be chains, though they

they be of Gold; believes that poyſon will kill him, though it may be ſweet in the mouth; he hath now ſuch a ſence of the evil and baſeneſs of ſin, as being ſo infinitely loathſome to God, as that he hates it with a perfect hatred; he hath a will in ſome meaſure conformed to the will of God; and what his friend, the Lord loves, he can't hate, and where his God hates he can't love, *Pſal.* 139. 22. *Do not I hate them O Lord which hate thee? and am I not grieved with them which riſe up againſt thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred. I count them mine enemies.* Now what is it that ſtirs the Pſalmiſts choller ſo much? Why, he had been working upon his own heart, in the former part of the Pſalm, the doctrine of Gods omniciency and goodneſs, and by meditation upon this ſubject he was brought under a lively ſence of the greatneſs of Divine kindneſs; and while his heart did thus muſe, the fire burnt, his ſoul was in a flame againſt ſin, *verſe* 17. *How precious are thy thoughts unto me O God!* O when the ſoul hath ſweet thoughts of God, it will have ſower thoughts of ſin. When the ſoul loves God dearly, it can't chuſe but hate ſin entirely. None behold ſuch deformity in ſin, as thoſe which behold moſt beauty in God. Hence it is that ſome of the people of God have (nay all of them which are really acquainted with God are of the ſame mind) counted it more deſirable to leap into the flames, then to venture upon a known ſin. It was no untruth in the abſolute poſition, though falſly applyed by *Job's* friend, that it is a great wickedneſs to chooſe the leaſt ſin before the greateſt ſuffering, *Job.* 36. 21. What was it that made *Paul* ſo weary of himſelf?

vvhat burden vvas it that made his back ſo ake? what pains cauſed thoſe bitter groans? *Rom.* 7. vvas it not ſin? and why did not *Paul* groan before as vvell as then? vvas it becauſe he then had no ſin at all, or leſs ſin than vvhen he made that bitter complaint? no ſuch matter, but becauſe he had then leſs acquaintance vvith God. But now he is become acquainted with God, the more he doth abhor himſelf for ſin. He now knows better than he did, his eyes are opened, and he ſees ſin in its colours, and he looks upon it as ſo great an evil, that he doth vvant words to expreſs the odious nature of it; therefore becauſe he can't find a vvorſe word, he calls ſin by its own name, *Sinful Sin*; vvhich he thought a more ſignificant Epithete, than if he had called it *Deviliſh Sin*. What makes the children of God to be ſo vveary of this vvorld, and ſo deſirous to be upon the wing? vvhy it is becauſe of better acquaintance elſevvhere; they know that then they ſhall put off that carrion that now they carry about vvith them; Sin I mean, which like a dead carcaſe bound to a living, doth now ſtink ſo abominably in their noſtrils; they know that then they ſhall have a ſweeter ſmell, and themſelves alſo ſmell more ſavoury in the noſtrils of God. They know that poverty ſhall be ſwallowed up vvith riches, want vvith fulneſs, ſin with holineſs, miſery vvith happineſs, they have an inheritance, a City, vvherein dwelleth righteouſneſs, and nothing that is unclean ſhall enter into it; and vvhen they come thither, they know the caſe vvill be altered vvith them, and that though now they bear about vvith them a body of death and ſin, yet then they ſhall have a body as pure, as bright

and

and glorious as the Sun, they ſhall be preſented by Chriſt to the Father without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing. He knows that as long as he is thus ſullied by his ſin, his great friend will not take ſo much pleaſure in his company. *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*, the Ark and *Dagon*, God and Sin can't dwell in the ſame heart; therefore he deſires to have leſs of ſins company, that he may have more of Gods; none of ſins company, that he may have always Gods company. Obſerve that conſtantly in your own experience and others, thoſe which walk moſt cloſe with God are moſt tender, as to the matter of ſin; and thoſe which are leſs in converſe with God, are more bold in their venturing upon ſin, and after it is committed they have leſs regret. What is the reaſon that one can ſwallow any thing almoſt, and another is afraid of the leaſt appearance of evil; he hates the garment ſpotted with the fleſh, he is as fearful of cloathing himſelf with wickedneſs, as of putting on the garments of one that hath had the Leproſie or Plague upon him; he hates vain thoughts, becauſe he loves God and his laws, *Pſalm.* 119. 104. 113.

3. Another glorious effect of Acquaintance with God, is, that it makes one to have very low and undervaluing thoughts of the world. When the Saint hath been with *Paul* raiſed up to the third Heaven, when he hath had ſome intimate converſe with God, he can look the world into almoſt nothing; nay, if it ſtand in competition with Chriſt, he counts it but as dung and droſs in compariſon of the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus his Lord, *Phil.* 3. 8. he can then ſet a higher value upon the light of Gods coun-

tenance, then upon Corn, and Wine, and Oyl. It is becauſe that poor Creatures know no better, that they dote ſo much upon the world; did they but know what it is to have one look of love from God, were they but acquainted with the glory of another world, they would ſoon diſreliſh every thing elſe; nothing will down with them which have been feaſted in Gods Houſe, but thoſe royal dainties. Taſte the world who will, ſaith the Saint, give me but more Grace, more of Chriſts company, let me but maintain an intimate familiarity with God, let me be but better acquainted with him, and be more frequently refreſhed with the ſmiles; this is all that I deſire upon earth, this is all that I expect to make my happineſs compleat in Heaven. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon Earth that I can deſire in compariſon of thee.* It was not without good reaſon that the *Pſalmiſt* prizes the Commands of God above Gold and Silver; it was no miſtake in *Solomon* to count Wiſdom more excellent then the fineſt Gold, and more precious than Rubies. That ſpiritual Merchant knew what he did when he ſold all that he had for that Pearl of great price; he was ſure he ſhould be no loſer by ſuch a bargain. Bring me a heavenly Creature that hath had a view by Faith, of the Glory of Gods countenance, that hath been in his company, that hath been brought into his Banqueting houſe, ſuch a one I am confident can eaſily ſpare that which moſt keep ſuch a fearful ſtir about, he can ſpare the world for them which are like to have no better a portion. Give him but more of thoſe ſpiritual pleaſures which he hath had in communion with God, and he deſires no more.

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He can now ſpeak it, and ſpeak it in good earneſt, that there is no compariſon between this world and another ; he can now call this world a ſhadow, and the glory of it graſs, and write Vanity, Emptineſs, and Vexation upon its beautiful Face, and contemn all its ſmiles and frowns, and look upon its greateſt Lovers, as perſons that deſerve to be pittied rather than envied, whoſe portion is ſo ſmall, whoſe happineſs ſo ſhort, and whoſe miſery and miſtake is ſo great and diſmal. It is a common thing for men to declaim againſt the world, and to ſay, it is but a little muck ; it's no unuſual thing for its greateſt Lovers to ſpeak againſt it, and ſay, that it is that which paſſeth away ; but yet for all that they purſue it more than Heaven, and are more earneſt for it, than the Salvation of their Souls, and more troubled at the thought of parting with it, than at the thought of their parting with God ; and the loſs of it troubles them more than if we tell them of the loſs of their ſouls : Such as theſe will not ſay, but that God is infinitely more to be loved than the whole world ; but yet if the World and God ſtand in competition, they ſtand not long diſputing which muſt give place, the World hath the uppermoſt room in the heart. But whence is this miſtake ? How comes the Servant to Ride, and the Maſter to go on foot ? Why is the world preferred before God ? Why hence it is, men know not God, they are not acquainted with his excellency ; the World is ſenſible, he ſees it, he feels it, he taſtes it, and ſo he doth not the things that are inviſible : And no wonder then, that ſenſe bares the ſway ; the man wants Faith to realize inviſibles, he wants ſenſes ſpiritually

exercised. But how he that knows God, and is acquainted with spiritual things, he hath quite another apprehension of the World, and that not only from Faith, but sometimes from a spiritual sense, and he can say that Divine Pleasures, Riches, and Enjoyments do as sensibly refresh him, yea, abundantly more than ever the world did. And when he hath been newly taking a walk in that heavenly Paradise, he looks back upon this World with grief and indignation, that he should ever love the world with his heart, when there was one that did infinitely more deserve his love, when there was a God, Christ, and Holiness to be loved; that he should be such a child, such a fool as to run after Butterflies, quarrel for a feather, hunt for a shadow, while God, Christ, and Glory, those great Substances lay by unregarded. Now he grudges that any thing should have his love but his God; his dearest Relations, if they stand in Gods way, must be run over, despised, hated. That which the men of the world fight, and kill, and spare not to damn their souls for, he sees now to be a pitiful worthless thing, which can't defer Death a moment, nor stand him in any stead in another world. He is all for that coin which will go currant in another Country; and if he be but rich in promises, rich in spiritual relations, rich in grace, he takes himself for no unhappy man; let the world speak or think what they will of him, he doth not much pass upon it, he believes that he is but a pilgrim and stranger here, and if he meet with no great kindness, it is but that which he expected. The truth of it is, he is almost afraid of the smiles of the world, not being ignorant of this,

that

that whom it kiſſes, it intends to betray, he can't be overfond of that which in all probability vvill keep God and him at a greater diſtance, and make his paſſage to glory next to impoſſible. He reckons that it's better being rich in grace, than rich in purſe; and he which lays up for his body, and provides not for his ſoul, is the greateſt fool in the world. Tell ſuch a one as *Moſes* of riches, honours, and preferments, he thinks them but poor ſorry things for a man of *Iſrael* to be taken with, and he will rather ſee them in the dirt, than part company with his ſuffering brethren, much leſs with God. It is ſtoried of *Anaxagoras*, that he ſeemed to be very little concerned when his countrey vvas in a flame; upon which being taxed by ſome, he made this reply, *There is none of you all care more for your country than I do for mine*; pointing with his finger up to heaven. Thus it is vvith the people of God; let others talk of Riches and Honour, but there is none of them all do value true Riches as they do; but here's the difference, one thinks he hath Riches when he hath the command of a great deal of Gold and Silver, the other knows he hath Riches when he hath Chriſt, and Grace, and can have good returns out of that other World. And which of theſe are the wiſeſt will ere long be ſeen. One looks upon heaven & glory as a ſhadow, a fable; and the things of this World, as the only realities; the other he looks upon Heaven, God and Eternity, as the greateſt realities, and moſt worthy of his higheſt valuation, and the things of this world as flying ſhadows, which can't fill the arms of him that doth imbrace them: And under this apprehenſion, and

ſenſe

ſence of things, no marvel that he doth prefer the ſubſtance before the ſhadow. He believes with that Worthy, that he was born for other things than to eat and drink, and ſleep, or to take his pleaſure, or to get an eſtate; he knows that the buſineſs in this world, is to provide for another, to get his peace made with God, to contemplate Heaven, and to get thither; and therefore you muſt not count it ſtrange, that ſuch a perſon as this is ſomewhat cold, and remiſs in his carrying on of lower deſigns; he knows that the diſproportion beween Finite and Infinite, Times, and Eternity, is no ſuch inconſiderable one as the moſt count upon. Again, he hath more than once experienced this, that the very joys and comforts that are to be had in the enjoying of Communion with God, even in this world, are unſpeakably more intence and refreſhing, than the higheſt ſenſual pleaſures in the world. One that is acquainted with God, will take the word of his Friend for true, which word tells him that whatſoever is preſented to his ſence, the world and all that is therein, muſt ere long be burnt up, whereupon he thinks it no imprudence at all to hazard preſent injoyments for future hopes; no folly to look after ſomething that will bear the flame. He thinks it ſcarce worth the while to be born to poſſeſs, if it were a whole world, except he were ſure of having ſomething after it that were better than what he met with here; he had rather have one ſmile from his friend, than thouſands of Gold and Silver: he would not for a world be to have his portion here, though it be never ſo large a one: he had rather by far be with *Lazarus* upon a dunghil, than ſit with *Dives* in a chair of State,

State, before the richeſt fare that the Sea, or Air, or Earth could afford him: he would not change conditions with thoſe which enjoy the moſt of the things of this world: he can thankfully want that which moſt commonly makes its poſſeſſors miſerable. O could you but talk with a man that lives in Heaven while he is upon earth, and could you but ſee and here how much he ſlights that which you adore! Give me neither poverty nor riches, but Food convenient for me is the higheſt that he dare pray for: He had rather live in a ſmoaking Cottage, and Have God for his companion, than dwell in the greateſt palace, and have the Devil for his Neighbour, Counſellor, Maſter. When a man hath been in Heaven by contemplation, though his body be upon the Earth, yet the beſt part of him, his affections, his love, joy, and heart, is ſtill there. *Sen. Ep.* 41. *One that doth converſe with God here, he is indeed that earthly lump, his body is below; but cold you ſee his thoughts, could you look into his heart, and ſee the inward actings of his ſoul, you ſhould ſee the man out of the world diſcourſing with God, he ſticks cloſe to the company of his Friend: He is like the Sun-beams, who though they touch the earth, yet they ſtil abide there from whence they are ſent, and are moſt intenſly hot neareſt the fountain, the Sun.* So the ſoul and thoughts of a child of God, they may, nay, they can't but glance upon the world: but it's moſt vigorous ſpriteful actings are towards God, & the heat of its affections are abundantly more remiſs and cold when they beat upon earthly objects. He that knows what it is to have the company of God, is almoſt ready to wonder how any one can be content with any thing below God: and as for himſelf,

himſelf, he takes himſelf for little better than a priſoner, while his ſoul is pent up in a body which is ſo unwieldy as to all ſpiritual employments, till it be refined by the grave. He would not be to dwell here for ever for a world, though he might enjoy more content than ever any ſince the Fall did. A Soul acquainted with God is a noble Creature indeed, it ſcorns petty low things, it thinks no Eſtate big enough for it, but that vvhich is infinite; he looks upon himſelf as a Citizen of no mean City, a Denizen of *Zion*, a Free-man of the *New Jeruſalem*, one of the Royal Society, over which Chriſt, that King of Glory, is the Preſident, his inheritance is greater than that which the Sun compaſſeth in its courſe. O when (ſaith ſuch a one) ſhall I leave theſe Cities of *Cabul*, and dwel with the King at *Jeruſalem*! O when ſhall my ſoul be ſafely ark'd! O when ſhall I be upon the vving for Heaven! O when ſhall I leave this body there vvhence it firſt came! When ſhall I go out of this cell, this cage! O that I were once ſafe in Heaven! O that I vvere in the immediate preſence of God, and might ſtand for ever before him, and have his bleſſed ſociety for ever & ever. Neither am I now quite without him; but how little, O how little is it that now I enjoy! O when ſhall I enter into the poſſeſſion of that better longer life! I ſtay & long for that ſeparating, or rather uniting hour, which will ſeparate my ſoul from my body, from my droſs, but perfectly unite me to God. Look then, O my Soul, upon all that thou ſeeſt below, but as ſo many Inns and reſting-places for a Pilgrim to take ſome little refreſhment in, and then to be gone. That day, O my fearful

Soul

ſoul, vvhich thou ſometimes feareſt as my laſt, is the birth-day of eternity. O what mean vve to love our priſons, fetters, burdens! What ail we to be ſo much pleaſed vvith our miſeries, and afraid of our happineſs? O this unbelief! O were Chriſtians but more in the company of God by Faith and Meditation, they vvould look upon God as great, & the world as a very ſmall thing. He that knows God to be great, ſees every thing below him little. It is an infallible argument of a Divine and Excellent Soul, and one that hath Acquaintance vvith God, vvhen he can judge all beneath God, as low, ſordid, baſe, and utterly unworthy of the reſpect of his ſoul.

4. Another glorious effect of acquaintance vvith God, is, that it will eaſe us of all ſorrows, or cure all ſorrows. As ſoon as any one hath but a ſaving knowledge of Chriſt, he is in ſuch a condition as that he need not trouble his head vvith care, nor his heart vvith fear; no more than a rich Heir that hath a tender-hearted, loving, wiſe Father, need not trouble himſelf vvhat he ſhall do for bread and cloathing: as long as the great cauſe of fear is taken away, ſo long he is vvell enough. As for thoſe that are unacquainted vvith God, they either are always afraid, or have cauſe always to be afraid: but as for a Child of God, that Scripture bears up his Soul under the mightieſt vvaves of fear. *There is no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, Rom.* 8. 1. He that is in Covenant vvith God, may in this vvorld undergo ſome petty injures, ſome inſurrections may be made againſt him; but this is his comfort, he is ſure never to be quite over-powered, never to be finally conquered! O the diſquietments and

fears

fears that ſtrangers and enemies are compaſſed with, or will be! And O the joy, the ſecurity, the true ſecurity that ſome have; at what a rate do they live! and how bravely do they die! mark the perfect, and behold the upright man; for the end of that man is peace. This was touched upon before, when I opened the nature and qualifications of this friend, and therefore I need ſay the leſs here; yet it being the great inquiry of the wiſeſt, how they may be ſheltered from this ſtrom; What ſhall they do to be cured of theſe heart-qualms? how they may be freed from fears? I ſhall not altogether paſs it over in this place. I can't but incourage poor ſtrangers, as they value the trueſt comforts, as they would be free from fear and trembling when the Foundations of the Earth ſhall be ſhaken, when the Mountains ſhall tremble, and melt at the preſence of God, the mighty God of *Jacob*, when the Heaven ſhall be rouled together as a Scroul, and be all of a flame. Make ſure of this Friend! it is impoſſible that one that hath ſuch a one for his friend ſhould much be daunted, when he hears of Wars, and Rumors of Wars, when the Peſtilence rages, when there are dreadful Earthquakes in ſundry places, and ſuch diſtreſs of Nations and perplexities, that the ſtouteſt heart ſhall ſink that hath not this to ſupport: Then a Child of God may lift up his head with comfort, becauſe his redemption draweth near. There is a vaſt difference between a godly man and a wicked, as to their affections, fears, joys, deſires, hope. The godly thinks long for that, which the wicked wiſhes withal his heart might never be; the Day of Judgment. The

righteous

righteous man is even delighted with the forethoughts of that, the thoughts of which doth put a damp upon all the comforts of the ungodly, he rejoyceth in that which makes his Neighbour to tremble. As for death, a gracious heart that hath kept his watch, and maintained a sweet & constant correspondency with God, and hath had his heart in heaven, and can look upon the great *Jehovah* as his friend, can't be very much affrighted at his approach: He is not much appaled, when he looks out at the window, & sees this messenger making haste to his house; and when he knocks at his door, he dares let him in, and can heartly bid him welcome; he understands whence he comes, and what his errand is, & though he look somwhat grimly, yet as long as he comes to conduct him to his friends house, he can dispence with that: he hath more reason to speake it then he which did. *(Plotinus) Let me make haste away to my Country; there are my excellent ancestors, there dwell my noble Relations, there is the constant residence of my deareſt Friends.* (Tull.) *O happy will that day be when I shall come into that glorious assembly, when I shall have better company then* Homer, Orpheus, Socrat. Cato, *when I shall sit down with* Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob, *in the Palace of their Friend and mine! O happy day when I shall come to me Fathers house, to that general Assembly, the Church of the First born, to an innumerable company of Angels, to Jesus, the Mediator of thy New-Covenant, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect.* A mans knowledg of other things may add to his fears, and make his miseries greater: But the more knowledg we have of God, the less our fears and sorrows must needs be: and when our knowledg

of

of God is perfect, all our fears and ſorrow ſhall be for ever blown over. I can't omit a brave ſpeech of that noble Stoick which comes to my mind, *Ar. Epict. l. 1. c. 7. (If the acquaintance and favour of* Cæſar *can keep you (as you are made to believe) from ſome fears? how much rather to have God for your Father and Friend? how little cauſe have ſuch to be afraid at any time of any thing. Death it ſelf is not evil to a friend of God: he may ſay, come, let us go quickly to our Fathers houſe, our Father calls us.* And doth this ſeem a ſmall matter to you; believe it, when you come to dye, you will be of another mind then: you will think that's a cordial vvorth any mony, that wil raiſe your ſpirits at ſuch a time, & make you with a ſmiling countenance, to paſſe into an everlaſting ſtate. It is but a folly, to expect that any thing in the world ſhould do this for us but the knowledg of our intereſt in God. It's poſſible indeed to get ſome ſtupifying intoxicating ſtuff, that makes a man to dye like a beaſt, vvithout any great horror, the Devils ſhop vvill furniſh poor dying Creatures with enough of that; Nay, he is glad if he can keep men a ſleep till death awaken them; but miſerable is that man vvho is beholding to the Devil for his Cordials; miſerable is he vvho hath nothing to keep him from a Hell upon Earth, but his own ignorance, and the Devils vvord. I promiſe you, 'tis none of the joyfulleſt ſpectacles to an inlightned Soul, to look upon one that lived vvickedly, and died peaceably. You would think, that a poor man, that is going to Execution, had little cauſe to ſmile, though he ſhould Ride to the Gallows upon an eaſie going Horſe, or in a Coach. The Swine is uſually very ſtill, vvhen the Butcher is

ſcraping

ſcraping away the hair of his Throat in order to the Sticking of him. It's no unuſual thing for a vile unſanctified ſinner, to leap with a mad confidence into eternity; but he alone hath a ſolid peace, who hath God for his friend. This is the only man hath juſt cauſe to ſing for joy, when his ſoul is going into another world. It was none of the worſt counſel which he gave, whoſoever he was who ſaid, that it doth highly concern us ſeriouſly to think of terrible things which we muſt moſt certainly ſee ere long, and to lay in ſuch proviſion as may make us fit to grapple with them when they come, O for that which will keep us from crying out hereafter? what ſhall I do? wo is me, I am undone: were it ſo that there were ſuch rare extraction to be made, which would certainly prolong our lives as long as we would, and make us always cheerful, what ſtriving would there be to get ſuch a receipt! O how would the great ones bring out their bags to purchaſe it at any rate! How vvillingly vvould they mortgage all their Lands, part vvith their richeſt Jewels to buy it! & yet how little will they expend for that, which if they had, would prove far more effectual! O vvould men and vvomen but underſtand themſelves, and mind their buſineſs, vvhat ſweet lives might they lead! vvhat a calm might there be conſtantly upon their Spirits! How cheerfully might they live! and how joyfully might they dye! *Tully* ſaith, that he and many others had been gathering the moſt powerful herbs that they could find to cure all fears; but, ſaith he, *I know not what is the matter, the diſeaſe is ſtill ſtronger than the remedy.* And doſt thou not know, O *Tully*, what's the matter? why then I

will tell thee. One principal Ingredient was left out, *viz.*, Faith in the blood of Christ, and Union with God by vertue of that blood. He that is by Christ brought acquainted with God, need not much fear griefs, sorrows, and such things Christ was acquainted with for him; he hath unsting'd Death, and sweetned the Grave; all his troubles are now but as Physick, the Poyson of them is corrected; though the Pill be bitter, yet it's of his Friends compoling, and therefore you may take it without any turning away of your head. *Shew me a man* (said old *Epictetus*) *that is happy truly in his life, and happy in his death, happy in his health, and in his sickness; happy when poor, scorned, tormented and banished; in a word happy in all conditions.* O that I could but talk with such a man! O that I could see such a spectacle! such a one as my eyes never yet beheld! Why, I will tell thee the reason of it, O *Epictetus*, It is because thou never sawest a Christian, one that was acquainted with God; for let me tell the world, *Through Grace I have seen such a sight, and do believe it to be the most lovely sight on this side Heaven.* I have seen one smiling when his Jaws have been falling, and eye-strings breaking; rejoycing, when most about him were weeping, and accounting it a high act of patience to be willing to live; and how do you like such a condition? *Is* it better to lie quivering, and shaking and groaning, or rejoycing and praysing and admiring of free grace, and setting forth the riches of Gods love and goodness: which of these would you chuse? I can easily believe that few are so bad, but that they could be contented as well as *Balaam* to dy the death of the righteous, and to have their latter

end

end like his? But would you dye joyfully? why then, you must live holily; get acquainted with God, and then this may be your state. I remember *Seneca* speaks of one *Pacuvius*, who when he was drunk cry'd out *Bene loxa* (*I have been alive*) very merrily. But had he well understood himself, he would have thought he had had much better reason to have cryed out, *I am dead, I am dead*. But however, what he said ungroundedly and wickedly, a Child of God may easily and thankfully say; when he is going to his last sleep, he may with joy and cheerfulness say, I have lived, and through grace, I have kept a fair correspondency with my God, my Friend, whom I am now going to dwell with for ever. Do not think therefore that I come to take away your comforts and joys, when I come to perswade you to get acquaintance with God, no such matter I would have you learn to rejoyce, but yet I would that that joy, should be born from above, that the foundation of it should be the knowledg of your interest in Gods love. Other joys may make you have a smiling countenance, but they do not raise and fill the Soul; for I must tell you, I am far from thinking that every one that laughs, is joyful, and without fears, Give me a man that knows that God is his portion, and Heaven his inheritance, that knows with what Friend, and in what a happy state he shall live after death; this, this is the cheerful man: such a one as this is can overlook momentany sorrows, he understands full well that the case will be quickly altered with him; and the thoughts of Eternal happiness do swallow up his temporal miseries. Tell one of Gods acquaintance, of po-

verty, he values his not, as long as he knows he hath a brave eſtate that can't be confiſcated, riches that none can take from him, a treaſure that thievs can't break through to, and ſteal. As for all worldly things, he knows that before a few years are over, he muſt part with them however; he is of that mans mind, who having a conſiderable ſum of money, and precious Jewels hid in his ſaddle, and a little odd mony in his pocket, was ſet upon by Thieves; who readily went to his pocket, and took what was there, and look't no further: Now the man ſcaping clear with his main treaſure, is ſo joyful that he takes no notice of what was ſtoln from him. Thus a child of God, if he loſe his eſtate, his liberty, and all his outward injoyments, he counts all theſe but inconſiderable, as long as his Soul is ſafe, his great treaſure is out of their reach. Tell him of torments, racks, flames, or what the policy of Hell can invent, he is not ignorant of this, that the more he ſuffers for Chriſts ſake, the greater cauſe he hath to rejoyce, to be exceeding glad, for great ſhall be his reward in heaven, and while they add to his ſufferings, they add to his glory; and, though againſt their will, while they would injure him, they do him the greateſt kindneſs; this light affliction vvorks for him, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. As long as his torments want that dreadful Epithete, *Eternal*, he doth not much paſs; the thoughts of Gods love make mans hatred inconſiderable; O how ſweet are the thoughts of his Friend, when his enemies are moſt bitter. Bleſſed be God, as for thoſe intolerable torments, he knows it's beyond mans power, and far from Gods will to

inflict

inflict them upon him, and so long he cares not much. All other tortures are but a Flea-bite to the pains of Hell, and an enraged Conscience; he can almost dare the world & the devil to do their worst, as being confident of this, that as long as he is dear to God, his Soul is out of their reach. Threaten him with banishment, he remembers, that he hath a friend that will find him out, and bear him company whersoever he is. Tell him of the barbarous unkindness and treachery of former Friends; he reads that his betters have been worse handled by their pretended Friends; above all, this cheers him, to think that all his Friends will not serve him so, he hath one Friend that will never forsake him, never be unfaithful to him. Now bring a wicked man upon Earth, that is without his sorrows, I know there is none, no not one; there is none of them all, but if he were within the light of those devouring flames, would tremble. Those that have wickedness enough to dare God, will not have courage enough to look him in the face, when he shall appear in flaming fire, to execute vengeance upon the ungodly; he that will not now be troubled at the doing of wickedness, will be troubled hereafter at the suffering for it. Let sinners say what they will, I am sure they can't be long without fears, to behold Christ, and his dear Servants coming together in the Clouds with Millions of mighty Angels to judge the world; I am confident it will be such an amazing sight as can't choose but cool their courage, and make the stoutest heart of them all to ake; I am sure that as light as they make of Damnation, and Gods displeasure, that the day

is coming, when they will believe it was no such cowardize to be afraid of an angry God, to fly from the wrath to come, and to run away from so formidable an enemy as sin. So that it's clear, that a wicked man will first or last be a fearful man, a *Magor missabib*, *Fear on every side*, shall be his name. But now he that doth exceedingly fear to offend God, need not exceedingly to fear any thing else; and he that fears not God, hath cause enough to fear every thing? O Sirs, it's a brave thing to be able to take death cheerfully by the hand, and to walk with him joyfully into another world; and this I say again a man acquainted with God may do; he hath this to comfort him, death doth more properly give him life, than take it away from him; and that as soon as he is dead his sin shall dye too, and his grace live and act without controul; then he shall live a life of joy, a life of perfect holiness, such a life as Saints and Angels live, such a life as Christ lives, the life of God, a life without death, an everlasting life; and why then should he be afraid of dying? As for his old Companion the body, it is gone to rest, and will ere long be awakened, and rise from his bed more vigorous and fit for those Noble employments which it must be engaged in for ever; and Soul and Body shall meet with more comfort, than now they part with pain, when the body shall be in another kind of dress than now it wears, and that also shall in some respects be like the Soul, agile, holy, immortal. This is such a man that I can call happy, and so ere long will those that now scorn and persecute him, call him too. Blessed is he that in his life is holy, and cheerful, but most cheerful and perfect at his

death

death. This is the happy portion of Gods acquaintance, this is the heritage of the Friends of the Bridegroom. I have read of a wise man, that would commend, and be thankful for every thing, because he was sure a friend of his had the management of every thing, whose understanding was infinite, and whose wisdome was unsearchable, who could and would work his own honour and his Friends comfort out of every thing, yea, though seemingly evil; for the greater the evil seems to be, the greater will be the real kindness which makes so much good out of it. O but I have lately lost many of my most neer and precious relations? If thou art one of Gods friends, let me tell thee for thy comfort, you will meet them at your Friends house, when you come thither. It was no unsuitable advice that he gave to his Friend *Lucilius*, to cheer him up after the loss of a dear Friend, Let us consider my dear *Lucilius*, that we our selves should be glad to be in that place, and to enjoy that company, which you are so sad that your Friend is gone to; and he that you say is lost, is not so, but happy before you. We do not judge rightly of things. Well then, would you know what a man is? would you pass a true estimate of him, and understand his worth and value? Why then consider the man without his riches, lay aside his honours, take away all his externals from him; nay further, lets see the man naked out of his body, and how doth the Soul look? is it now rich, beautiful, joyful? can it stand confidently before God? doth it appear cheerfully in the presence of it's maker? Why, this is something; It matters not much whether his body were fed

with Pulſe or Dainties, cloathed with Rags or Scarlet, it matters not whether his Soul went out of his mouth, or at a wound, whether he dyed in bed of doun, or in flames. Methinks by this time you ſhould be ready to think that Religion is an excellent thing, that Gods acquaintance is deſirable, and that no life is like the life of a Chriſtian, all whoſe ſorrows end in joys, whoſe miſeries make him more happy, whoſe ſhame for Chriſt will make for his glory. In a word, whoſe death brings him into life. *This is the generation of them that ſeek thee, that ſeek thy face, O Jacob.*

5. Another effect of acquaintance with God is, That it will make us more highly to honour him. Here familiarity is far from breeding contempt. Thoſe that are ſtrangers to God ſee not his worth and excellency, they honour him not, but they have the moſt vile, low, contemptible thoughts of the infinitely glorious Majeſty, and they think any thing will ſerve his turn, they make more bold with him than they would do with a man like themſelves, they put him off with the leavings of the world: When they have been feeding their luſts, and ſerving their pleaſures, and gratifying the Devil all the day long, then they come between ſleep and awake, and pretend a great deal of love to him, and anger with themſelves for their ſin, whereas God knows, they do but play the hyprocrites in all they do, & mean nothing that they ſay: Lip-devotion, knee-religion God ſhall have, and but a little of that too; and that pitiful ſtuff that they preſent him with, they think God is very much beholding to them for. As for the ſanctifying the Lord God

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in their hearts; as for inward hearty-love; as for high prizings and admirings of God, as for a real honouring of God, and worshipping of him in Spirit, and in Truth, it is that which they understand not; and as for them which do, they laugh at them, as if they were guilty of the greatest folly in the world. But now he which converseth with God, beholds such a beauty, excellency, majesty, and glory in him, that it is ready quite to swallow up his soul; he speaks much of God, but yet he thinks more; he wonders that a God of such infinite goodness should be no more loved, that a God of such infinite greatness, justice and holiness should be no more feared, that a God of such unspeakable power should be no more obeyed; and while he remembers his own contempt of God in former times, and the too mean thoughts that he hath at present of him, he doth even stand astonished to think that he should be on this side the state of the damned. He that before thought every thing too much for God, now thinks nothing enough for him. The man is strangely changed by his new acquaintance, so that he may not improperly be called a *New man*, all things are new with him. In honor to this new guest, he hath got on new cloaths, he is clad with Righteousness, as with a garment: new food, it is his meat and drink to do the will of his Father which is in Heaven; new drink, Wine on the Lees well refined, he draws all out of those wells of Consolation, the Promises: he hath new thoughts, words, and actions; God, invisibles, and all the things of faith are now Substances with him. Now the threats or promises of a God are not counted small matters;

Heaven

Heaven, Hell, and Eternity go for the greatest Realities, because God saith they are such. So he that sometimes lived without God in the world, had no respect at all to his glory, but valued himself and his most base lust, and the Devil himself before God, doth now respect Gods glory in all that he doth, he ventures upon nothing deliberately, but what may please him; Religion runs through all he doth; he eats, he drinks, and sleeps, and cloaths himself, he prayes, he works, he recreates himself with a design for God. The grand project he still is carrying on, is the honour of God. He will undertake nothing of importance, before he consult with, and hath the advice and direction of his Friend. Whatsoever he hath that is worth any thing, he sends it to this Friend, he presents him with his first fruits, he sacrificeth his male, the best of his flock; desires that his Friend may be always at his house, and that he may have the best entertainment that he can possibly give; and he is ashamed at the best, that he can make him no more welcome, whom he so highly honours; he is grieved that his entertainment is no better; he would fain give God his first, and last thoughts, his warmest affections; he would gladly have the strength and vigor of body and soul spent in his service; he studies how to improve all mercies and enjoyments for God, to take hold of all opportunities that he can possibly, and to make the best of them for the promoting that grand Design which he hath on foot, his Honour; He thinks not wife and children, houses and lands, body, soul, and all that he can make in the world too good for him. Whatever temptations he

conquers,

conquers, whatsoever sin he slayes, whatsoever piece of gallantry or prowess he hath done in his inrods upon Satans Kingdom, he gives the honour of all to the valour, conduct, and assistance of this his noble Ally and friend. He sets the Crown of the King of *Ammon*, like *Joab* upon the head of this King *David*. He hath such a high esteem for God, that he thinks nothing well done but when it is done exactly as he would have it; he thinks every thing then best, when it is done according to Gods will: and he counts it no small weakness to be unwilling that infinite Wisdom rather than folly should have the managing of all the affairs of the world. He desires to maintain a quick and lively sence of the Divine Majesty upon his Soul, and that he may here and hereafter give him, as he hath infinite cause, all honour, glory, and praise.

6. Another effect of this Acquaintance with God is this, It would put abundance of life and vigour into the soul; it would, as it were, oyl the wheels, and set them a running. There are none in the world that act at so high a rate as those do, which are most acquainted with God. O how undefatigable are they in their pains! with what earnestness and faith do they pray! as if they saw the glorious God before them, and were talking with him; with what reverence, seriousness and delight do they read, meditate & hear the Word of God, and do all that they do! They know in some measure what it is to present their bodies and souls as a living sacrifice to God through Christ; they understand what it means to be fervent in spirit serving the Lord; they will not serve God with that which cost

them

them nothing, kneeling down, and saying a few formal words before God in the evening, repeating the Lords Prayer, and the Creed, and the Ten Commandments beween sleeping and waking, doth no body any wrong, and the like, is not enough to serve his turn, his conscience will not be thus put off; but he labours with all his might to stir up his soul to lay hold upon God, he is not content to go off from his knees without his Fathers blessing. This is the Friend and Acquaintance of God, this is the brave *Israelite*, that spiritual Prince that will not let God go till he hath prevailed with him. He doth not go to his work, as if he cared not whether he work'd or no; he is not sick of the service of God, but he rejoyceth and works righteousnes; his work is his pleasure, and he goes on merrily with his business. Those that are intimately acquainted with God, are not so cold, faint, and dull in the service of God, as others be. Such a one as knows God very well, and hath been oft made welcome by him, why, he comes with a great deal of confidence, and knocks at Gods door, and, for his part, he will not go away, though the door be not presently opened, but he continues knocking because he is sure that his Friend is within, he knows that he is never from home, and that he can never come unseasonably to him. He comes to Prayer as if he were going to storm Heaven, he gets spiritual things by violence, he comes to Duty as to fight for a Crown, he is ashamed to offer the lame & the blind to God, but he chooseth for him the best in his stock; he desires to improve his interest in God to the height, this favourite of Heaven comes frequently to the

King

King to beg some great thing or other, and he is sure that his Friend will deny him nothing, that it is a greater kindness to deny than give; he knows that his King hath a large purse, and as large a heart, and he is not willing to lose such excellent things that are to be had for the asking for; he is not ignorant that spiritual things are worth the seeking for, and therefore he will seek and seek earnestly; he hath tried more than once, and he remembers to his joy, that wonderful things are to be had, if we will but take pains for them, and prefer our Petitions, or rather get them preferr'd by that great Master of Requests, the Lord Jesus Christ, and follow our business close, that it can't possibly miscarry let it be what it will; the comfort in enjoying will abundantly pay all the charges we can be at in seeking; therefore he layes about him as one that is in good earnest; the confidence that he hath in the good will of God, it puts life into all his petitions. A poor Creature that very rarely injoys any communion with God, that is very little or not at all acquainted with him, is ready to take up with a few formal complemental performances, he is weary of his work before he hath well begun it, he is quickly out of breath; but now one that is very well acquainted with God, is not so soon weary of his company; it may be, he may be somewhat cold when he sets out, but by that time he hath gone a few turns with his Friend, his blood grows warm, he is sometimes so taken up with God in duty, that he can scarce tell when to have done? O he thinks it's good being there? O it was a sweet season! These are the actings and experiences

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ſome noble Soul. I have heard ſome Chriſtians ſay, that had not God made it their duty to follow their callings, they could be glad with all their hearts to do nothing elſe, day nor night, but hear the myſteries of Gods love in Chriſt opened; Read, Pray, Meditate, and be immediately engaged in the ſervice of God. Sure ſomething is the matter with theſe perſons more than ordinary, that their Palate ſhould be ſo Spiritualized, as that it is their Food, their Wine, their Dainties, to be actually imployed in the great acts of Religion. The more any one is acquainted with God, the more delight he takes in the Ordinances of God, as one of Gods Children, he deſires the ſincere milk of the word: before he was acquainted with God, he found it far otherwiſe; then nothing almoſt would down with him, the pure word could not be reliſhed, except it was adulterated with flouriſhes of humane wit. He had very little appetite to good wholſome Food, his ſtomack was ready to turn at it, except it were ſo cook't and ſawc't, and ſet out, that an underſtanding man could ſcarce tell what to make of it! What do you ſay to this, you that are ſo faint and cold, in what you do, in the ſervice of God? Come a little nearer, get better acquainted with God, and you ſhall find ſuch entertainment from him, that you will ſcarce be able to keep long from his houſe; get oft into his company, and you ſhall feel your Soul ſtrengthned with new ſpirits, animated with a ſtrange life, Heat and Warmth. You will not complain that the Sabbath is the longeſt day in the week; you will not ſay, *what a weariness is it? When will the new Moons and Sabbaths be*

at

at an end? But you would think long till the Sabbath day come, and when it is come, the pleasure that you take in the work of that day would make you to think it the shortest day, and gone too soon: and when you have spent it in the most diligent attendance upon God, you would wish it were to begin again, or that you were to begin such a Sabbath that would never have an end. This is the condition of one that is very intimately acquainted with God, his nearness to his Master, makes him to follow his work, and he knows he shall lose nothing by it, something will be coming in ever and anon, which will more than quit his cost: So that when God calls, he is at hand, and readily answers, *Speak Lord, for thy Servant hears.* When God hath any message, any hot service to do, he accounts it his great honour to be imployed in it, and saith, here I am, send me. I believe he that spoke it (*Isa.* 6. 8.) might be a little confident, when he said, *Lay what thou wilt upon me, O Gods, I have power to bear it, it shall not be my Burthen, but my Ornament:* Yet I am perswaded one that is acquainted with God, can say it, and say it again in good earnest; Lord what wilt thou have me to do? wilt thou have me to preach for thee, to run through Fire and Water for thee, to dy for thee, to go or come? O Lord do but bear me company, and give me strength, and it shall be done: I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me. This is one of Gods Champions, he watches, he keeps upon his guard, he fights stoutly, he stands his ground, in every thing he demeans himself gallantly, he quits himself like a Souldier of Christ; and that which makes him thus valiant,

is becauſe he is ſo near his Captain. Ask *Epictetus* what made *Socrates* do as he did, and he will tell you (*l.* 3. *c.* 22) *It was becauſe he was a Friend of God his Servant, and partaker of his Kingdom.* This is ſtrange Language of a Heathen! but had he known what it was to live under the moſt lively ſence of Gods love, to have had ſuch intimate converſe with him, as ſome Chriſtians have had, what would he have ſaid? As for the Saint that keeps cloſe to God, he keeps cloſe to duty; his work is to ſerve, love, and praiſe God: this is his buſineſs, both by himſelf, and with others.

7. Another excellent effect of this acquaintance with God, is, it will make a man Patient under all the diſpenſations of Gods providence, in all conditions to be content, in quietneſſe to poſſeſs his Spirit: Acquaintance with God will make him be at peace, not to open his mouth againſt God, whatſoever he lays upon him. What was it that kept ſuch a calm in *Pauls* heart, when there was ſuch a conſtant ſtorm without him? was it not his ſence of his intereſt in Gods love? though all the world were his enemies, yet as long as Chriſt was his Friend, he doth not care; though men and devils be againſt him, yet if God be for him, he paſſeth not much upon it: though men be never ſo unjuſt: yet God will never be ſo, that's his comfort. It's a ſmall matter for him to be judged with mans judgment, as long as he is ſure that God will acquit him; he knows that juſtice it ſelf will do him no wrong, infinite goodneſs could not be unkind, and that wiſdon it ſelf could work glorious effects out of theſe things which the world call evil; if he do receive evil

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the hands of God, he is confident he deserves more; if it be good, and but a little, he is thankful, becauſe he deſerved none at all. Let the worſt come to the worſt, if all the Devils in Hell, and all his inſtruments upon Earth ſhould combine againſt him, as long as he is ſure of the love of God, and that none of them all, can pluck him out of the Arms of the Almighty, he is not very much concerned; Heaven will make amends for all: whatſoever he ſuffers, it is nothing to the diſpleaſure of a God, it is nothing to everlaſting burnings. He believes that if his perſecutors did know what he knows, they would as ſoon eat fire, as do as they do; therefore he rather pitties them, than is angry with them, as ſeeing that their day is coming! How ſeldom have you either *Paul* or *Silas* complaining of their ſufferings? How rarely bemoaning their condition? And what is it that makes them ſo patient? what have they to ſweeten ſuch bitter draughts? Why, God loves them; and ſo long, they do not much care though others hate them. Mans frown can't ſink a Soul to Hell, nor his favour make one happy for ever. It is but a little while, and all tears ſhall be wiped away from their eyes. The kindneſs, and faithfulneſs of God is enough to make a man cheerfully to hold up his head, when all the world is againſt him. When the moſt Spiritual Chriſtians do complain, it is more of themſelves, than of their perſecutors: O my unbelieving heart! O that I ſhould love God no more! O that my heart ſhould be no more taken up with the great things of Eternity! This is the condition which thoſe that are moſt Spiritual, are in Poverty, Impriſonment, Baniſhment, and all

theſe things which moſt call dreadful, when they come to a man that is much in communion with God, they find him Patient, Meek and Calm, theſe are not the things which put him upon the rack; God is his Friend, and that anſwers all.

8. Another glorious effect of Acquaintance with God, is, That it will make all our enjoyments doubly ſweet. He hath what he hath in love; he need not be afraid of poyſon in any of theſe Dainties which comes from his deareſt Friends Table; he may eat his meat with a joyful heart, and not tremble for fear of the reckoning at laſt; what he enjoys is freely given him; all his Diſhes have this brave Sauce; they are ſeaſon'd with love, and come out of the hand of a Father. He that is the great Proprietor, hath given him leave to uſe theſe things, and hath promiſed alſo to give him better things than theſe. He knows that this is not his portion, that this is nothing to what he ſhall poſſeſs; it is no ſmall comfort to him, to think that he ſhall never want any thing that is needful for him, or that if he be brought into ſome exigences, he hath a Friend that he can go to when he will, and be heartily welcome; he hath a portion, an eſtate in another Country that can never be ſpent, though he live at never ſo high a rate; and the more he ſpends upon it, the greater it is; he hath a key to that ſtorehouſe which can never be emptied; he hath an intereſt in him in whom all fulneſs doth dwell: his Friend is noble, let him *but ask and he ſhall have, ſeek and he ſhall find, knock & it ſhall be opened unto him.* God is ſo free that he takes care of all his creatures; yea, ſo great is his Royal Bounty, that it doth largely provide for

for his enemies? and ſhall his friends, his children ſtarve? Hath he not done ſo in ancient dayes? when his people were in the wilderneſs he ſent them their Dyet from his own houſe, he fed them with Angels food. But if this ſhould not be, if he kept them ſhort, that may be done with as great kindneſs to them as the former: faſting may fatten the ſoul more than faſting doth the body; and this makes all welcome. If he have a great deal, he rejoyceth to think that he ſhall have more ſtill one day; if he have but a little he is ſatisfied; and ſo his condition is made more comfortable to him, then the greateſt enjoyments of the wicked are to them.

9. Another effect of his Acquaintance with God, is, That it will make a man wiſe. He that before he was acquainted with God had not the wit to know his Friends from his Foes, by his converſe with God is made more wiſe then the great Sages and grand Politicians of the world. Upon his acquaintance with God, he is ſoon able to know right from wrong, to diſtinguiſh between good and evil. He hath now the wiſdom to look after the ſalvation of his ſoul, to ſeek the Kingdom of Heaven in the firſt place, and not to be laughed and jeered into Hell. He is ſo wiſe, that he doth out-wit the Devil himſelf; he doth get ſo much wiſdom by his acquaintance with God, that God will reveal many of his great ſecrets to him. I know one my ſelf that was little different from thoſe which are commonly called *Naturals*, whom when the Lord had wonderfully wrought upon, and brought near to himſelf, after his converſe and acquaintance with God, his very natural underſtanding was exceedingly

refined, and afterward he became more discreet and fit to manage wordly affairs. But however this be, I am sure the knowledge of God gives understanding to the simple, *A good understanding have they which love the Lord: and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* Converse with men of wisdom doth not a little improve a man; but converse with the wise God it makes a strange alteration indeed, they are made wise unto Salvation. Of such as these *David* thought it best to make his Privy Council. These are the persons that are the fittest to advise with in businesses of the greatest importance in the world; they have learned the art of managing the affairs of greatest concernment with the greatest care and prudence. I know the wise world usually look upon these persons, as the veriest fools living. To converse with God, to take all possible *care to make their calling and election sure,* to do what one can to be happy for ever, goes amongst them for a ridiculous thing, and more than needs. But it is no great matter, they will not be beat from their work thus; they should be fools indeed, if such things as these should make them turn their backs upon God; they will not be jeer'd out of Heaven, they pass not upon mans censures. He is wise that God calls so, and he will be found to be a fool which God saith is so. As for the man that is acquainted with God, all his actions speak him a man of prudence, one that hath a deep reach with him, he is a man of an excellent foresight, he sees the clouds a gathering a great way off, the storm before it riseth, and he hides himself, in him are hid the treasures of wisdom, he makes no foolish choice, he is a child

of

of wiſdom; he doth in ſome meaſure underſtand himſelf, and knows where his intereſt lies, and is faithful to it; he makes no fooliſh bargains, when he parts with Dung for Diamonds, Braſs for God, Earth for Heaven, Sin for Holineſs, preſent ſhort-liv'd Pleaſures for ſure & everlaſting Delights, the Devil for God. How ſay you, ye mad Gallants, that look upon the Saint as a Fool, and Religion as a ridiculous thing? Are theſe ſuch fooliſh actings? is it ſo undiſcreet a choice to prefer Heaven before Hell? If this be to be a fool, I wiſh I were more ſuch a fool; if this be ſo contemptible a thing, O that I may yet be more vile! Let me ſay further, as great a folly as it is, there are none of you all, but ere long will wiſh you had been ſuch fools. A few years will make you all of another mind, when you ſee what thoſe that you counted fools have got, and what you with your wiſdom have loſt; then let's hear you calling them fools for chuſing Chriſt for their portion; and your ſelf wiſe for deſpiſing him, and chuſing of this preſent world for your portion. Now, it is their being acquainted with God, that hath made them thus wiſe; time was, that they were as very fools as any in the world, till they fell into Gods company; and ever ſince that, they have acted with a great deal more prudence: their being much in Gods company hath much improved them. They may thank God for all that skill that they have attained to; for he it is that teached them, he is always at their elbow to direct them; when they are about to be cheated, he vvhiſpers them in the ear, lets them underſtand the fraud; and when God ſpeaks, they liſten to his counſel. It was no

falſhood which *Seneca* ſpake (though he underſtood not the meaning of this Doctrine of Reconciliation) in the commendation of Wiſdom. *Wiſdom* (ſaith he) *is a great ſpacious thing, it inſtructs us both in Divine and Humane things, it teacheth a man how to demean himſelf in relation to things, paſt, preſent, and to come: it informs him about things that are fading, and things that are laſtening; and by it he knows how to put a true eſtimate and value on both: this learns one the difference between Time and Eternity.* Thus far *Seneca*, But where is this Wiſdom to be found? not in *Ariſtole* nor *Plato's* writings. The grand Maximes of this Wiſdom were little underſtood in the *Peripatetick* or *Stoick* ſchools; Fleſh & Bloud, Humane Wiſdom improv'd to the height, reveal not theſe things to us. Where then is this Wiſdom to be found? and where is the place of underſtanding? man knows not the price of it naturally: The Depth ſaith, It is not in me, it can't be got for Silver, &c. Deſtruction and Death ſay, we have heard the fame thereof with our ears. There is talk of Wiſdom in Hell, there they can ſay what reports were made to them of the Excellencies of Chriſt, and how earneſtly they were offered to be inſtructed in the ways of Wiſdom. But in Hell there is Wiſdom, though a world of them, which by their wiſdom, knew not God, be there: where then is wiſdom? God underſtands the way of it, and he teacheth man wiſdom, and thoſe that will come to him, ſubmit to his inſtructions, may learn: the Leſſon is ſhort, yet learnt but by few; he tells man, that to fear and love his Maker, and to be brought into Union, Friendſhip, and Acquaintance with God, that is Wiſdom; and to depart

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from iniquity, that is underſtanding, *Job* 28. 12, 13, 14, &c.

10. Another effect of this Acquaintance with God, is, It will make a man rich. As ſoon as any one is acquainted with God, he is ſet in a thriving way. Man at the firſt had his eſtate in his own hands, and he kept up his Trade for a little time, and but for a little time; for though his ſtock was great, yet meeting with the Serpent, that great Cheater, he was miſerably overreached, and ſo ſadly impaired in his Spiritual Eſtate, that he broke preſently; and had not Jeſus Chriſt ſtept in and bayled him, and been his ſurety, he would ſoon have had all his Creditors upon his back, and have been laid up in that diſmal priſon, till he ſhould have paid the utmoſt farthing; but through the kindneſs of Chriſt the grand Creditor had patience, & offers to make up the buſineſs, & to compound upon better tearms than the ſinner could poſſibly expect. Chriſt undertakes to heal the infinite breach, to bring God and Man acquainted, & to ſet him up again, in caſe he will but accept of the gracious terms of agreement; and thus undon man that was before in a beggarly condition, upon his return to God, is ſet in a better way than ever; God his Friend now takes ſuch order for him, that he ſhall be ſure never to break again; he will be his Caſh-keeper, he will have the overſight of all, he will teach him ſuch an art, that he ſhall be ſure to get by every thing that he trades in; he ſhall gain by his loſſes, grow rich by his poverty, and drive the beſt trade it may be, when he is forced to ſhut his Shop-doors, I mean in a time of a violent perſecution. Whatſoever loſſes or croſſes

come, he is ſure he ſhall never be undone as long as his Friend hath ſo great a bank; he hath a key, and he can go to an infinite Treaſury, when he pleaſeth, and fetch out ſupplies for any exigencies or occaſions; and when all thoſe that made ſuch a great ſhow in the World, and that were taken for Merchants, that were exceeding well to paſs, ſhall be proclaimed Bankrupts, and be found not worth a Farthing, and be carryed to priſon for debt; then he hath mony in his purſe, coyn that will go currant in any Country. In the mean time, though he be thought to be worth nothing, to drive but a pittiful poor trade, yet when he comes to dye, and when an exact inventory is taken of all that he is worth, he is found worth thouſands: and no wonder when he hath ſuch a Partner, that will be ſure to ſee that his buſineſs ſhall be managed to the beſt advantage, and that he ſhall never be out of purſe; upon this account, the man can't chooſe but thrive; he vvill have ſomething to ſhow for his gains, vvhen others have nothing. When the rich ones of the world ſhall be begging a drop of water, he is at the fountain. If we ſhould take a ſurvey of that mans eſtate, that is acquainted with God, you muſt lift up your eyes to thoſe everlaſting Hills, you muſt look Eaſt, Weſt, North and South; all this is his, things preſent, and things to come; mount up to the top of *Carmel*, your ſight is too ſhort, you ſee not the hundredth part of his inheritance, all this is nothing, he hath a brave eſtate in another Country; he is rich in Bills and Bonds, when he comes to age, he vvill have no man know vvhat falls to him; and whence hath he all this vvealth, hath he not got every penny of it ſince he was acquainted

quainted with God? But I ſhall be but brief upon this Head, becauſe I have handled, vvhat might have fallen in here before; but the world laughs vvhen I ſpeak at this rate, and think that I am much miſtaken; the godly man rich! that's ſtrange! vvhat, rich with ſcarce cloaths to their back; rich, and fare ſo hardly; rich, and poſſeſs nothing! this is ſtrange wealth. I grant it, it is ſo, for their eſtate is in inviſibles; it is not he that poſſeſſeth much, but he that wants little, is rich: Will you call nothing riches, but Gold and Silver, and Houſes and Lands? is Virtue, Grace, Holineſs no riches? And will you call theſe little becauſe he hath not ſo much trouble and vexation with his eſtate as ſome have? is Heaven, Glory, the everlaſting enjoyment of God nothing? Is the poſſeſſing that which is more worth than a thouſand worlds, no riches; If to have all things that are good for them; If to have more than their hearts can conceive; If to be filled with all Spiritual plenty, be counted poverty; let me be thus poor, rather than injoy the Revenue of all the Princes, and great Ones of the World? And what do you think of this, you that are worth never a penny? Are you deſirous to have a great Eſtate? you that go backward, and get nothing, would be ſet in ſuch a way, as that you may be ſure never to break? Why then, get acquainted with God, and you can't but grow rich.

11. Another glorious effect of acquaintance with God, is, that it makes a man like God, which is the top of the Creatures honour. Company is of an aſſimilating nature. He that before was unholy, and like the Devil; by converſion to God, and

and converſe with him is made holy like God. He that before was cruel, fiery, unmerciful, by his acquaintance with God is made kind, meek, and lovely. He that in his natural ſtate, was a Non-Conformiſt to the Laws of his maker, when he is well ſtudied in this point, is the ſtiffeſt Conformiſt, he ſticks cloſe to the righteous Cannons of the holy God, and will not by his good will turn to the right hand, or to the left. He that was ſometimes very unlike God, when he is brought nigh unto him, his countenance is changed, his features are altered, and the lineaments of Gods image appear very lively in his face; and the more he is in Gods company, and the older he grows, the more he grows like him. O how doth ſuch a one ſhine! what a Majeſty, Glory, and Beauty is there in his face! the oftner he comes to God, the more he is taken with his Excellency, the more he labours to imitate him. He ſtudies what God is; and as far as his nature is capable of it in this life, he deſires to be like him. If God be true and faithful, he dare not be falſe; but he will hate the way of lying; if God be free and bountiful, he thinks it very ill becomes one of his Children to hide his face from his own fleſh to ſhut up his bowels, to be void of natural affection. If purity be ſo eminent in God, he knows that impurity would not be commendable in himſelf. In a word, he deſires in every thing to carry himſelf, as one whoſe higheſt ambition is to ſpeak, act, and think as one that would be like God. It was bravely ſpoken of him (*Sen.* 3. 73.) eſpecially if we conſider what the man was, who told his Friend that call'd him to Heaven *in compendium, To get as much happineſs as this place, this*

ſoul

ſoul, while in this body, is capable of; that is, to get God for his Friend, to be like him. This is a ſhort cut to glory, a Soul carried to Heaven, or Heaven brought down to the Soul. A full and perfect conformity and likeneſs to God is the very Glory of Glory; and a partial conformity to him upon earth, is his unſpeakable honour in this life: O were men and women better acquainted with God, they would ſparkle and ſhine in their Generation, ſo that their enemies ſhould be forced to ſay, that a Saint is another kind of Creature than a ſenſual ſinner. O why ſtand you then ſo far off from God! come nearer him, and the rays of his glorious Image will reflect from your lives! Be acquainted with him, and you ſhall be like him; keep much in his company by Faith, ſecret Prayer and Meditation, and you will be more Holy, Divine, Spiritual.

12. The laſt effect of this acquaintance with God, which I ſhall name, is this, it will make a man better, far more Excellent in all ſtates, and relations; all his Friends will have the better life with him, the whole Family, it may be where he dwells, will fare the better for him? If he be a Child; he is more dutiful to his Parent than he was, while he was unacquainted with God? If he be a Servant, he is more diligent and Faithful than before, he ſerves not with eye ſervice, but doth what he doth with ſingleneſs of heart, as unto the Lord? If he be a maſter, it makes him more exemplary, and makes him to take care that his Houſhold ſhould ſerve the Lord; he had rather his ſervants ſhould make bold with him than God, he is concerned for the honour of God in his Family, as much as his own; if he be a Fa-

ther,

ther, he is careful to bring up his childern for God, he is more Spiritual in his affections to them, and desirous to leave them God for their Father, Friend, Portion; as he is a neighbour, he follows peace with all men, and holiness, because he hath seen God? How sweet and amiable doth acquaintance with God make a man! how ready to heal divisions! how full of goodness and charity! how ready to do good unto all, but especially to those that be of the Houshold of Faith! how compassionate, and tender-hearted! how ready to provoke others also to love, and good works: so that the whole Parish lives the quieter, all the poor fare the better, all the neighbourhood, some way or other is beholding to him: one that knows God himself, doth what he can to get others acquainted with God too? how sweetly doth he commend the way of wisdom? with what earnestness, and pitty doth he plead with sinners, and labour to teach transgressors, the paths of God, that sinners may be converted unto him? How doth he set before them the necessity of a change, the danger of their present state, and the excellent qualities of this Friend that he would bring them acquainted with, telling them, that time was, that he also was as they are, and thought his condition as safe as they do their's: but that it pleased the Lord by this word to open his eyes, and to reveal to him the need that he had of Christ, and to inable him to accept of him, and to prize him above the whole world. In all conditions, and relations, he commends Religion, and shews that godliness, where it is in the power and life of it, is a brave thing, which makes so great an alteration in a man for the

better?

better? If he be ſick, he rejoyceth, and thinks cheerfully of death, the grave and Eternity: and in this ſtate demeans himſelf ſo, that ſtanders by, can't but be convinced of the reality of inviſibles, and to think ſure there is ſomething more than ordinary in acquaintance with God, which makes men ſo undaunted, and with ſo much gallantry to meet death; ſure their condition is better than ours, or elſe they could never be ſo joyful at ſuch a time as this is: Then he tells of the uſe of a Chriſt, the benefit of a Redeemer in a dying hour, and how infinitely it is for their intereſt, in time to provide for Eternity? if he be well, he deſires to improve his health for God, and to ſerve his Maker with the ſtrength of Body, and Soul. If he be poor, he ſhews a pattern of Patience, Meekneſs, Thankfulneſs, and lets the world underſtand that godlineſs with content is great gain; if he be rich, he deſires to be rich in good works alſo, and to trade with ſuch trifles as *Gold* and Silver, for rich commodities, as Grace, Peace and *Glory*: with the things of this world, for the things of another: To lay up for himſelf Treaſure, which neither Moth can corrupt, nor Thieves break through, and ſteal: and to make to himſelf a Friend of the unrighteous Mammon; to be a Faithful ſteward of thoſe Talents that his great Lord and Maſter hath committed to his truſt: he ſhows how great a good it is to be great and good too. This is the man which doth adorn the Goſpel: this is the Chriſtian which doth credit his profeſſion: this, tis to be intimately acquainted with *God*! O how uſeful might men and women be in their generations, were they but more in *Gods* company? O what

a ſavour would there be of their Graces in the place where they live? How would poor Creatures that receive good by their holy counſels, and ſuitable lives, bleſs God for the day, that ever they were born, and adore that goodneſs, which brought them near ſuch and ſuch a one, be whoſe means God hath brought them out of the Vaſſalage and Captivity of Satan, and by whoſe help they have got acquainted with a Friend that is more worth to them than a world; for one that hath God for his Friend, can't but deſire that others alſo ſhould have an intereſt in him; they know how ill it will go with them that know not God, and this makes them to do what they can to bring God and man acquainted; they would make thoſe that are good better, and them that are bad good? if thoſe that he converſeth with, or ſtands related to, were enemies, he lets them know that a Chriſtian can love him dearly, whoſe ſin he hates entirely, and that a child of God can pitty them, that have no pitty at all for him. I might add how oft are a great many wicked ones ſpared from temporal judgements, for the ſakes of the righteous that are amongſt them.

III. HEAD OF MOTIVES.

The next Head of *Motives* to enforce this Exhortation, might be taken from the danger of not being acquainted with God. If you could live ſecurely without God, and be in a ſafe condition, though you ſtill remained a ſtranger to him, the buſineſs then were not ſo very conſiderable; if you could find any in Heaven that could do as much

much for you as God can, I ſhould not be ſo earneſt with you to get an intereſt in his favour; if you could by any means poſſible be everlaſtingly happy any other way, if without this Friend get to Heaven, and without his Alliance avoid utter ruine, I ſhould have had the leſs reaſon to uſe ſo much importunity; I might then poſſibly have ſpared my ſelf the trouble of ſpeaking theſe things, and you the trouble of hearing of them. But when I ſee and know that it is as much as their life and ſouls is worth, to ſlight and undervalue the Motions that I am now a making to you in Chriſts ſtead, how can I with any faithfulneſs and love to your ſouls hold my peace? How can I ſtand looking upon men and women that are about to murder their own ſouls, and forbear crying out? How can *I* endure to ſee poor Creatures running with all the ſpeed they can to that diſmal place, from whence there is no Redemption, and not endeavour to ſtop them? Would you have me ſo cruel to your ſouls; as not to tell that which doth infinitely concern their well-being? for, let me tell you, God will not ſtand neuter, he will be either for you, or againſt you; he is the Lord of Hoſts, and he will fight on one ſide or other. Now ſee to your matters, as the nature of them doth require. What do you think of having a God againſt you? if God be againſt you, who will be for you? *There is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.* The ſafeſt condition you can be in, while God is your enemy, is ſadly hazzardous; ſuch a one hangs by a twined thread over everlaſting flames; he ſtands upon the brink of that bottomleſs pit, and one ſhove, one ſlip, ſends him going

for

for ever; he ſtands upon a pinnacle, which one little blaſt may blow him off, and then where is the man to all Eternity? if he fall thence, there is no riſing again; if he once go into that other world, there is no recovery of him, if one would give a world to bring him back again. I ſay it again, if God be not your Friend, he will be your Enemy: and what do you think of ſuch an Enemy? It is but a word, a look, and they fall. Let me tell you, that except you ſpeedily humble your ſelves, you ſhall find that we do not make the danger greater than it is: according to his fear ſo is his wrath: you may know ſoon enough to your coſt, what the diſpleaſure of a God is, how dreadful his arrows, how ſharp his ſword. Not a man of them ſhall ſcape that will not accept of peace upon his termes, and that quickly too. O that will be a ſad day, when God ſhall ſay, *Bring them out and ſlay them before my face.* If God be your enemy, who do you think will be your friend? To which of the Saints or Angels will you fly? where will you go for ſhelter againſt the ſtorm of that terrible one? what armour will defend you from the dint of his weapons? what in the world can ſtand that man in any ſtead that hath ſuch an Adverſary? eſpecially when he comes to give his definitive ſentence againſt him for high Treaſon. *Dives* may ſay, Father, and *Abraham*, Son: but what comfort for all that had the miſerable Child from his holy Father? doth he not inſtead of cooling his tongue with a drop of water, lay more burning coals upon it, & if it be poſſible, make the heat of it greater: *ſon, remember that thou in thy life time hadſt thy good things.* Thus *Abraham* by putting him in mind what his condition

was,

was, makes him with the greater ſorrow to feel what it is. The memory of former joys under preſent ſorrows, makes them ſting the more. Well then, if you would not hereafter reflect with an aking heart upon your loſt enjoyments, think with a ſerious and thankful heart of the preſent offers, that you may in Eternity reflect with joy upon your ſhort ſorrows in time. If you will not be acquainted with God, you ſhall be acquainted with the Devil, and know whoſe company is beſt by woful exprience. If you will not believe his Word, you ſhall feel his Sword. If his kindneſs and goodneſs will not melt you, his power and juſtice ſhall break you; for he that now is ſo patient, will ere long roar like a Lyon, and tear in pieces, and there ſhall be none to deliver; he will break his ſtubborn enemies with a rod of iron, and daſh them in pieces like a potters veſſel. Thoſe that will not know his love, ſhall know ſomething elſe; I will not ſay what, for it is inexpreſſible. But only this remember, It is ſuch a God that you will have to deal with. before whom the mountains quake, and the hills remove out of their places, before whom the great Tyrants of the world have fallen; and ſhall you ſtand? Where are all thoſe Giants? Where are the inhabitants of the old World? What is become of *Nimrod* that mighty hunter, and all his fellows? Where are all thoſe daring ſinners, that ſcorned to accept of a pardom, mercy and peace, and which had the courage to grapple with omnipotency it ſelf? who got the day? who had the worſt of it at laſt? and art thou ſtronger than they? is thy power greater, thy underſtanding deeper, thy Allyes more conſide-

rable then theirs? A fly may be too hard for *Pharaoh*; but *Pharaoh* can never be too hard for God. Becauſe judgement is not ſpeedily executed againſt thee, thou thinkeſt therefore it may be it is becauſe God cannot deal with thee, and upon this account thy heart is fully ſet in thee to do wickedly; but know thou, for all this that God will bring thee to judgement. Conſider this, that as fair as it ſeems to be now, the winds may riſe, the clouds may gather of a ſudden, the Heavens may be overcaſt in a moment; and what will you do then? when Heaven and Earth ſhall be in a Flame, then you will be ſcraping acquaintance with God, then you will be glad to be owned by him, then you would willingly Chriſt ſhould take notice of you, and ſay, *You bleſſed of my Father*; then you will ſtand at the door and knock, and cry, and pray, and plead, and ſay, *Lord, Lord, have I not been oft at thy houſe? have I not eat at thy table, and taught in thy name in our ſtreets?* and yet thou ſhalt be diſmiſſed with this ſhort and ſharp anſwer, *Depart, I know you not.* How do you like ſuch an anſwer as this is? how will you take it when you ſtand begging at the door for one crumb of mercy, one drop of Chriſts bloud, to be ſent away with a bitter ſcorn and denial, or elſe to be anſwered with ſilence? Whereas you were invited to the feaſt as well as thoſe that went in, and you would not hear, though God ſent meſſenger after meſſenger to fetch you, you thought your oxen better company than your God, you took more pleaſure in your dogs, than in the hunting after thoſe nobler things. What do you think of ſuch expoſtulations as theſe? what replies can you make

make to theſe accuſations? ere long you will find theſe things realities; ere long all your friends will be dead and gone, and if they would help you, they cannot; your eſtate will be conſumed, your houſes will all be burnt, all your attendants, except care and fear, will ſhortly forſake you, your Gold and Silver will not ere longe be worth a ruſh; and what will you do then? nay, the greateſt friends that you had will become your enemies. Little do you think, as kind as they ſeem to be, what your good fellows, the World, and the Devil will do againſt you; Little do you think how falſe your friends will prove when it comes to that, that they ſee that all is going? then they alſo will help forward your ruine. Thoſe that you durſt have truſted your life with, will accuſe you and help to caſt you. Thoſe which incouraged to ſin, will witneſs againſt for ſin. Your good Fellows, your Confederates in wickedneſs, your dear Friends, that you loved more than God, that you did not ſpare to venture your life and ſoul for. O it will make your heart ake to ſee ſuch come in againſt you, which you thought loved you ſo dearly! O to have a Wife, a Child, a Husband, an old Friend to come before the Judge, and to make known ſuch things as you hoped had been buried for ever. It will make your ears to tingle, to hear one crying out, Lord, if it had not been for him, I had turned and repented; it's long of him that I am in this woful condition; I was reſolved many a time and oft to ſeek after another world, and to provide for my ſoul, but he would not let me alone; when I began to be ſerious, he laughed and jeer'd me, and would never be at quiet till he had made

me as bad as himſelf; he carried me from the Ale-houſe to the Tavern, from thence to a Play-houſe, from a Play-houſe to a Whore-houſe, from thence to the High-way, from thence to the Gaol, from the Gaol to the Gallows, and from thence I came hither; and I may thank him for all this. O how will men look when they ſee the beſt friends that they had, come in thus againſt them! this 'tis to truſt to faithleſs friends; this 'tis to make light of acquaintance with God. Your Gold and Silver will be a witneſs againſt you, and will eat your fleſh as with a canker; your Children, Relations good and bad, will ſpeak bitter things againſt you; your own Family will curſe you, and ſay, Lord, we never heard any thing of God, except in an Oath from his mouth; we never heard any thing of Religion, except it were in deriſion of it in his Family; and thoſe of us that were a little ſerious, and began to think of our ſouls, he would ſnib and browbeat, and never give us a kind look till we did as he did; nay, the Devil who now doth ſo much flatter ſinners, and make them believe that he is ſo much their friend, will then ſhew himſelf; he will then be as cruel as he now ſeems kind; he that now tempts to ſin ſo impetuouſly, will hereafter accuſe for ſin violently, and torment for ſin unmercifully. The people of God which weep over ſinners, and pray for them, and wiſh them well with their ſouls, will then ſee juſtice executed upon their neareſt Relations, without the leaſt ſorrow; nay, they alſo will come in againſt them too, and ſay, Lord I told them of this woful day, O Lord thou knoweſt I forewarned them of that which is now come to paſs,

paſs, I pleaded vvith them with all the compaſſion that I could, and they ſcorned my pitty, they would not pity themſelves, but made light of that glory which they are going from, and of that Hell that they are going to; and now, O Lord, thou art juſt and righteous, that thou haſt thus judged them. This vvill be the language of thoſe that are your beſt friends; the people of God they will be your enemies one day, if you vvill not now mind the making of your peace vvith *God*; they muſt and will, be on *Gods* ſide againſt all the World, they muſt and will take part with their Friend, and clear him when he judges, and juſtifie him when he condemns you. O that you that are now ſtrangers to God, would but conſider of theſe things! O that you would but think what this battel may be, where the combatants are ſo unequal. Stand ſtill O Sun in the valley of *Ajalom*, till the Lord have avenged him of his enemies: Muſter your ſelves, O ye ſtars, and fight in your courſes againſt thoſe miſerable ſinners, that have waged a war againſt their Maker; plant your mighty Cannons, ſhoot down huge Hailſtones, Arrows of fire, and hot Thunderbolts? O how do the wounded fall! how many are the ſlain of the Lord, multitudes, multitudes in the valley of Deciſion, for the day of the Lord is terrible. Behold Gods enemies falling by thouſands, behold the garments rouling in blood, hear the prancing of his terrible ones, the mountains are covered with Horſes and Chariots of fire. Gods Souldiers run from one place to another with their flaming Swords in their hands, Arm'd with the juſtice of God, jealouſie, power and indignation! O the dreadful

ſlaughter that is made. Millions, millions fall, they are not able to ſtand, not one of them can lift up his hand, their hearts fail them, paleneſs and trembling hath ſeized upon the ſtouteſt of them all. The bow of the Lord is ſtrong: from the blood of the ſlain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of the Lord turneth not back, the ſword of the Almighty returns not empty? How do the mighty Ones, fall in the midſt of this battell! A hot battell indeed in which none ſcape? Who is he that cometh from *Edom* with dyed garments from *Boſrah*? This that is glorious in his apparel, and travelling in the greatneſs of his ſtrength, the Lord of Hoſts is his Name. Wherefore art thou red in thy apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth the wine-fat? I have troden the wine-preſs alone, and of the people there was none with me? For I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood ſhall be ſprinkled upon my garments, and I will ſtain all my raiment, for the day of Vengeance is in my Heart, and the year of my Redeemed is come. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their ſtrength to the Earth, the hand of the Lord ſhall be known, the power of the mighty *Jehovah* ſhall be felt, and his indignation towards his Enemies. For behold he will come with fire, and with chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire: For by fire, and by his ſword will he plead with all fleſh: and the ſlain of the Lord ſhall be many, and the Saints ſhall go forth and look upon the Carcaſes of the men that have tranſgreſſed a-

gainſt

gainſt me: for their worm ſhall not dye, neither ſhall their fire be quenched, and they ſhall be an abhorring unto all fleſh. Upon the wicked he ſhall rain ſnares, fire and brimſtone, and horrible tempeſt. This ſhall be the portion of their Cup! This 'tis to fight againſt God! This 'tis to defie the Lord of Hoſt! This 'tis to refuſe a peace that would have been ſo unſpeakably advantagious! To ſpeak a little plainer, this is all that ſinners are like to get by their ſtanding it out againſt the tenders of Grace and Mercy. And are you ſtill deſirous to engage in this dreadful war? Will you ſtill bid defiance to the Almighty, and make nothing of ſuch things as you have heard of? Is the loſs of your blood, the loſs of your *Soul*, your utter undoing for ever, no great matter with you? Well then, go on bold ſinner, Arm thy ſelf *Cap-a-pee*, gird thy ſword upon thy thigh, get thy ſhield and buckler ready, prepare to meet thy God: Go up, O thou valiant Warrior, and let's ſee thy valour, behold thy enemy hath taken the field; go up, and look thy God in the face if thou dareſt; come ſhew thy ſelf a mark for God, and turn not thy back like a coward, venture upon the mouth of the Cannon, ruſh upon the thick boſſes of Gods buckler, if you long to periſh everlaſtingly. You have heard what the war will coſt you, and as you like it now, do. And what do you laugh at all this? well then, go on, but be it upon your peril, your blood be upon your own *Souls*: As for me I could not have ſaid much more than I have, to diſſwade you from this deſperate enterpriſe; I foreſee what a caſe you will be in, when you are in the heat of the battel, and I deſire to weep in ſecret for thee,

as one that will moſt certainly be undone, if thou doſt not ſpeedily alter thy mind, wherefore my loyns are filled with pain, pangs have taken hold upon me as the panges of a woman that travelleth, I am bowed down at the thoughts of thy miſery, I am diſmayed at the ſeeing of thy deſtruction. The ſinner ventures for all this! He is marched into the field! Set a watch-man; let him declare what he ſeeth. Who meets that furious wretch? A Lyon, a lyon roareth, he is torn in pieces, and none can ſave him, he is gone, he is gon! he is gon for ever! and who may the mad man thank for all this? Who could help it? He would venture though he was told as much. Well then, ſee what's like to befall the enemies of God: You hear what is like to be the condition of all them that will not be acquainted with God: Firſt, or Laſt, you likewiſe may behold what a caſe you your ſelf ſhall be in ere it be long, except you do ſpeedily repent of your folly, and meet your adverſary in the way, and humble your ſelf before the mighty *Jehovah*; ſpeak quickly? What will you do? Turn, or Burn; Repent, or Dye. Yet you do but hear, you do not feel; but thouſands, and millions feel what the diſpleaſure of God is, what the breach of his Covenant is, and what effects of a war with the Lord of Hoſts is. O be wiſe by their fall, let their deſtruction be your inſtruction, take heed what you do, leſt you be the next that God ſhall deal with as an enemy: As yet God offers to be Friends with you; but whether God will do as much to morrow as he doth to day; I do not know. I tell you but ſo, it's hard putting it to the venture. Remember you had large

proffers

proffers of Grace, and pardon made to you, God hath ſent us to let you know his will and pleaſure, and we demand of you from him to give us your anſwer ſpeedily. And what can't you yet reſolve? Is it ſo difficult a buſineſs to determine what to fix upon? O fooliſh people, and unwiſe? O unſpeakable madneſs! How juſt muſt their condemnation needs be, who are offered ſalvation ſo often, and refuſe it? who are ſo oft told of damnation, and yet run into it? in a word, who might have God for their Friend, and had rather have him for their enemy.

4. The next head of *Motives*, by which I might inforce this duty of acquaintance with God, may be taken from the examples of them which made all the Friends they can to get acquainted with God. Behold a cloud of witneſſes, which do all with one conſent ſpeak high in the commendation of this Friend, that I am perſwading you all that I can to be acquainted with. Are you wiſer than all your neighbours, is the ignorant objection of ſome that would take it very heinouſly, if we ſhould call them fools, when we put them upon a ſerious diligence in purſuit of the beſt things? Why, let me retort this objection upon themſelves, are you wiſer than *Enoch* and *Noah*? have you more underſtanding than *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*? Have you more wit than *David*? Are you wiſer than *Heman*, *Daniel*, and many others of thoſe brave worthies, which were the wonders of the world, the Non-ſuches of their age, and a pattern to future Generations? This was the greateſt piece of their wiſdom to walk with God, this was the beſt of their policy to get ſo potent an Allie; this ſpake them to be men of

a deeper reach, and a larger underſtanding than others, becauſe they made it their buſineſs to get acquainted with God, and thus to make their intereſt as large as Heaven, and their peace and proſperity as ſure as the oath of God could make it. Do you think that all theſe men were miſtaken? did their wiſdom lie only in a prudent management of their worſdly affairs to their beſt advantage? what then, did they mean ſome of them to leave all that they had ſo chearfully upon the command of God? dare you ſay that they prized the favour of God at too high a rate? as for their parts, they thought they could never value ſuch a friend as God at too much. What elſe was the meaning of their longing, panting, and breathing after him? Why elſe are they ſo glad of his company, his preſence? How loath were they to do any thing that might be in the leaſt diſpleaſing to him? What bitter moanes did they make, if he did but withdraw a while, if he did but a little abſent himſelf from them? how wonderful deſirous were they of enjoying communion with him? how earneſt to live in his houſe for ever? Dare you ſay that they were all fools and mad men for refuſing the embraces of this preſent world, for ſlighting its ſmiles, and undervaluing its greateſt kindneſſes, and chooſing that favour of God, though with the ſcorns and reproaches of the world, rather than to hazard his anger, whoſe wrath burns to the bottom of Hell. Behold, what a glorious company of theſe ſtand upon mount *Zion* with Harps in their hands, with thoſe hundred and forty and four thouſand, and the Lamb with an innumerable multitude of all Nations, People,

and

and Languages. Why all these were of the friends and Acquaintance of God, or else they had never had those Crowns, Robes, and Palms in their hands. Now, why should not our souls be as dear to us as theirs were to them? Will not Heaven be as good for us as them? is it not as needful for us to get a friend of God, as them? Will not God do as much for us as them, if we will but do as they did, walk with him. The truth of it is, the number of them which are saved is but few, in comparison of the multitudes of them which know not God, and go the broad way; yet for all that, take them absolutely, they are abundance; so many that the Scripture saith they are innumerable. Do but read over the History of some of their Lives, turn over the holy Records, look sometimes into those Sacred Chronicles, and behold how chearfully they served God, how actively they followed the Lamb whereſoever he goes, through thick and thin. Hear what their language is now they are got home safe, now Christ hath brought them to glory, and they are at their Friends house, What do they talk of? what is their discourse about? do they complain what a sad journey they had of it through a howling wilderness, after they had passed the Red Sea, through a thousand sorrows and trials? do they say that now they are at their journeys end they are weary, and wish they had never taken so long and tedious a journey? do they not rather speak the quite contrary, and that if it were to go again they would do it with far more speed and chearfulness than they did? Listen, hark, methinks I hear them from the walls of the *New Jerusalem*, crying out, Come away

away, come away, fall on bravely, follow your buſineſs gallantly but a little while longer, and the City is your own; fetch your ſcaling ladders, run up apace, mount the rampiers, fear nothing though the Devil play his Artillery upon them, yet it is but powder, he ſhall never give you a mortal wound; reſiſt him and he will flee, and the field is yours; the Spoil, the Crown, the Honour will pay for your pains, bloud, and danger. Fall on brave ſouls, fall on; the valianter you be, the more ſafe you are. Methinks I hear thoſe noble Saints encouraging of you to get acquaintance with God, and ſaying to you that are yet afar off, come near. Come away poor ſouls, come away, what do you mean thus to delay? O little do you think what a friend vve now find of God; it vvas but a little, a very little that was told us of the excellency of Chriſt, and the glories of this place, to vvhat we experience; It vvas no falſe report that we heard vvhen we was upon earth, of the happineſs of Heaven: O here's a prize worth the running for; a Kingdom, a Crown vvorth the fighting for, an Eſtate worth the looking after. We have not now our ſtint; vve are not dieted with thoſe Spiritual Dainties, vve have not now and then a ſip, a draught, a bit in a corner, but we are at the fountain, vve are daily feaſted vvith infinite pleaſures, our hearts are full, brim-full, they run over, we ſwim in an ocean of ſpiritual enjoyments; theſe things are beyond your capacity now to underſtand. Were we to live upon earth again, and did vve know what we do now know, vve ſhould ever pine with our earneſt longing for God, the living God, to be in his immediate preſence, and to be at that

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angelical work of praiſing, ſerving, and loving him for ever. Wherefore brethren, let us encourage one another, *Come let us go up to the houſe of the Lord; his dwelling is in* Salem, *his palace is upon mount* Zion. Why ſhould not we go on as merrily in the pathes of Wiſdom, as the wicked in the road of Hell? How do the Devils Champions encourage and hearten one another up? How do they laugh, ſing and roar, as if their life were the only life; for ſhame let's tell them they lye in their teeth. Who hath the beſt company, they or we? the Patriarchs and Prophets, the Apoſtles and thouſands of Martyrs are gone ſinging before ſome of our dear Relations, Fathers, Brethren and Siſters are newly welcomed by Chriſt to his Fathers houſe; and they are bleſſing that rich mercy that hath conducted them to ſuch a place, to ſuch a friend! we have many thouſands of Saints Militant that are going along with us as faſt as they can, and God himſelf will bear us company, and why do we yet linger? O that we were upon the wing! O that our ſouls were like the Chariots of *Aminabab*! O that the Lord would ſtrengthen poor ſhort-winded Creatures? O that we could run and not be weary, and walk and not faint! O that we might have now and then a hearty meal, and that in the ſtrength of them we could travel to the mount of God! O that that acquaintance might now be happily begun, which may never have an end! O that God would viſit us oft, and get into our hearts! O that he that gave thoſe Worthies in former times ſo much grace, would pour out of the ſame grace in abundance upon our ſouls! O that he would ſhed abroad his love in our hearts! O that

we could maintain a conſtant intercourſe with him here, till we come to a perfect enjoyment of him in glory hereafter! O that we may ſee thy face, thy bleſſed face by faith! O that thou wouldeſt cauſe thy glory to paſs before us! O that thy marvellous loving kindneſs might be made known to a company of poor Creatures of us, whoſe deſire is to fear thee, who would fain love thee with the ſtrength of our ſouls! O bleſſed are they that love thee, that are beloved by thee!

5. I might alſo inſiſt upon another Head of *Motives*, which is named in the Text, which is this, *Acquaint now thy ſelf with him, and thou ſhalt be at peace.* Though there be nothing but Warr on every ſide, you ſhall have peace. This peace of God, whatſoever you may think of it, is unſpeakably advantagious; the benefits that would accrue to a ſoul upon this peace are infinite; It is a *peace that paſſeth all underſtanding.* When we have this peace concluded, we may drive a brave Trade without diſturbance for the richeſt Commodities. If we were thus acquainted with God, we ſhall have ſuch a peace as that we may laugh at the ſhaking of the ſpear, and not be much diſturbed when we hear of dreadful things abroad in the World. He that is acquainted with God may ſafely venture up and down, he hath Gods paſs, a ſtrong man of war for his convoy, he hath ſuch powerful allies that he need not fear; as long as he is at peace with God, he is ſure not to be quite overcome by man. He is at peace with himſelf, when the Air ecchoes with Drums and Trumpets, and the roaring of Guns, a muſick that pleaſeth the Devils

Devils Ear; He may ſtill rejoyce, becauſe he hath a bird within, which ſings ſweetly; there is a harmony between his will and Gods, a harmony between his heart and his mouth. This is no ſuch contemptible thing, and if you knew what a wounded Spirit, a fire in the boſom is, you would ſay ſo. This peace that ſuch a one hath, is a well-grounded peace; not ſuch a one as is built upon ignorance, and hardneſs of heart; but ſuch a peace as reſults from the ſence of the pardon of ſin, and reconciliation with God, through the blood of Chriſt; that blood of Chriſt hath waſhed his conſcience from dead works. Sins he had, and hath, but ſome of them he ſees lying dead like the Egyptians upon the ſhore, others ſtriving for life, with a deaths wound upon them; and though he have enemies ſtill living, yet they are ſuch as ſhall never have the abſolute dominion over him: as long as the great quarrel between him and God is at an end, all is well enough, the Law hath nothing againſt him, all his accuſers are ſilenced; Chriſt hath fulfilled and ſatisfied the Law for him; The great Creator hath given a full and general acquittance, all debts are diſcharged for him, and therefore the man hath little reaſon to trouble his head much with cares and fears; now he may go up and down any where, and not fear the Serjeant, his noble ſurety hath paid that vaſt debt, he hath laid down the ten thouſand Talents upon the Nail, ſo that the man is at peace with God, he is alſo at peace with all the Creatures in the world, from the glorious Angels that are in Heaven, to the meaneſt inſect or plant; they are ſo far from doing him any real harm, that they all are ſervants

vants to the Friends of God, they all ſtand ready to oppoſe their Eenemies; and thoſe of them that are mortal are ready to lay down their lives for one that ſtands thus related to God. For when any enters into Covenant with God, God alſo makes a Covenant for them with the beaſts of the field. Great peace have they that love Gods law, and nothing ſhall offend them; ſuch a one is at peace with death and the grave. We read of ſome profane Monſters that made a Covenant with death, and were at an agreement with Hell: but this Covenant will ſoon be broken, becauſe he that hath the keys of death and Hell, the power of life and death, never ſubſcribed to the Articles of their agreement. But now the godly man hath a Friend that hath made a Covenant for him, a firm Covenant with death, and Hell, ſo that none of them ſhall ever do him the leaſt wrong. As for death, Chriſt hath took out it's ſting; as for the grave, Chriſt hath ſpiced, and ſeaſon'd it, it's Power is maſter'd, it's Terribleneſs is taken away! it's now no priſon, Chriſt hath opened the doors of it, and now it is but a Chamber of repoſe, a bed to reſt in; and he that hath already opened this door, when it was bolted, barr'd and double-locked, can and will ere long open it again, and awaken his from their ſleep; and is this inconſiderable? Is not ſuch a peace as this is, deſireable? Who that is well in his wits, would not be glad to be in ſo ſecure a condition as this peace will put him in? And who are like to have the benefit of this peace, but the Friends of God! O therefore if you value your own peace, if you would be undiſturbed from ſtorms without, & Heart-quakes within;

within: If you would have all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, at peace with you: If you would have Death unſtung, and the Grave a Chamber, and not a Priſon, why then, get acquainted with God, and you ſhall be at peace.

6. The next head of *Motives*, I might take from theſe words, *Thereby good ſhall come unto you. Acquaint your ſelf with him, and be at peace, and thereby good ſhall come unto you.* But I ſhall here be but brief. Think of what you will that is good for you, and if you are acquainted with God, you ſhall have it for asking for; or that which is far better than that which you deſire: For the Lord God is a Sun, and a Shield, he will give Grace and Glory, & no good thing will he with-hold from them which walk uprightly; that is, from thoſe that are acquainted with him. All his ways are mercy and truth, to ſuch as be in covenant with him; and all ſhall work together for good, to them that love him. Inlarge thy deſires as wide as the Heavens, requeſt what you will, ask never ſo much, and you ſhall have it; And what would you have more? If it be the good of profit that you deſire; What greater gain than Godlineſs? Who can give ſuch rewards to his ſervants as *God*? Who will give greater portions to his children than this Father? Who is like to thrive better than he, who hath ſuch a vaſt ſtock, ſuch a great Trade, ſuch quick and great returns; and above all ſuch a Partner? O that thoſe that are all for profit and gain, that cry out, what advantage ſhall it be to me, if I ſerve *God*? and what profit to me, if I am acquainted with him? O that ſuch would

but do that which will be moſt for their profit, I would deſire no more of them than this. O that they would but try what a gainful Trade Religion in it's power is! The greateſt Merchants that ever walked the Exchange, if they be not acquainted with God, and have not Chriſt for their Factor, are but Pedlars to the Saints. One that is acquainted with God, gets more in one Hour, in one Prayer, at one Sermon, in one Meditation, than all the rich men of the world are worth, put all their eſtates together: One receives his peace, the other his pounds; the one hath by way of return a great deal of troubleſome Lumber, the other his Box of precious Pearls, and a Jewel of an infinite value. O little doth the laborious worldling think what poor and ſmall gains his are, when he gets moſt, to what this ſpiritual Merchant gets; he would not ſell what he gets ſometimes in one morning, for all the riches of both the *Indies*. He trades in ſuch Commodities which will not ſuffer damage upon the Sea; his Veſſel is light and ſtrong, the Maſter of it never made a loſing voyage. All his wares are unvaluable; and though his ſhip be in many a dreadful ſtorm, though ſometimes ſhe be becalm'd, though it be long before ſhe returns; yet as long as ſhe hath ſuch Proviſions within, ſuch a Pilot, ſuch Anchors, ſhe can't miſcarry, ſhe will come into the Harbour Richly Laden: The world will not believe this, but I am ſure there is never a man breathing, but will ſooner ſay, that no gain is like the gain of Chriſt and Glory. One return from Heaven, one anſwer of Prayer, one ſmile from God, one look of love, the head of one *Goliah*, the death of one ſin, one

Soul

Soul brought home to Chriſt, one drooping ſoul comforted, is a greater mercy (for all the ignorant world make nothing of ſuch things as theſe) than to be inveſted with the greateſt Honours, than to be poſſeſſed of all the Riches, than to enjoy all the Pleaſures that the whole world can afford. But O, were mens eyes opened, were men within ſight of thoſe devouring Flames, then they would believe, that a Chriſt were worth the having, Grace a Pearl that cannot be overvalued, and that no Trade was comparable to a Spiritual Merchant, no Art like that, by which one may turn every thing into Gold. But if it be the good of pleaſure you look more after; can there be greater pleaſures than thoſe which are in the preſence of God? Can there be any greater pleaſures, than to rejoyce in God, and to be made welcome by him, than to drink Flagons of that excellent Liquor, which is better than wine? Can there be better Muſick, than to hear ſo many Millions of ſweet Voyces ſinging *Halelujahs*! O There's a Conſort! There's Melody indeed! If you deſire that other good, the good of Honeſty, a rare accompliſhment, perfection of Grace, purity of Soul; wherewithal ſhall a young man cleanſe his ways, but by taking heed thereto, according to his word. Well then, lay all theſe *Motives* together, and let's ſee whether they will any whit prevail. If the nature of the perſon with whom I would fain have you acquainted, if all theſe admirable qualities that are in him (if I may ſo call them) may ſignifie any thing, if all thoſe glorious effects of acquaintance with God weigh any thing with you, one would think by this time you ſhould be well reſolved. If the

danger of not being acquainted with God, may make you afraid of ſtanding it out; if good or evil, if peace or war, if life or death, If all this be as much as nothing, what then is ſomething? If the frequent pleading of mercy, if the blood of Chriſt have any voice, if the expoſtulations of his Embaſſadors may be heard, Why ſhould you not then be perſwaded? If all this will not move you, what can we ſay more? If we could ſhew you Heaven, and the glories of another world, could we let you ſee the Face of Chriſt, could we any way in the world reach you hearts, and perſwade you by any means to mind the things of Eternal peace, we would do it with all our hearts. If we were ſure to get you with us, and to bring you acquainted with God, we could willingly come begging on our bare knees to you, and beſeech you to be reconciled to God. We ſee that diſmal day a coming, and are grieved to think, what a ſad taking you will be in then; we know the caſe will then be altered with them, which will not be perſwaded to be reconciled to God. O what a woful condition will they be in, which have heard or read theſe Sermons, and yet for all that, would not mind the looking after acquaintance with God! How will ſuch wiſh that they had never been born, or that they had their being in ſome of the dark ſavage corners of the world, where they might never have heard of the Doctrine of Reconciliation, being acquainted with God, and union with Chriſt, peace with their offended Maker, rather than having heard of theſe things to make light of them! O to hear of ſuch a Friend, and to have him for an enemy; to hear of Peace, and to chooſe War;

War; to hear of Heaven, and go to Hell, this is ſad indeed. It would have been far better for ſuch, that they had never known the ways of God, than after they had known them, to go in the ways of Folly. O that men and women had but ſuch ſerious thoughts of theſe things as they will have ere long! O that they would but believe Heaven, and Hell, and Eternity to be ſuch Realities as ſhortly they will! O that mens hearts were but affected with things, as they will be when their ſouls are juſt a going, or a little after they are in another world! But O the miſerable condition of the world! O the lamentable ſtate of Profeſſors, that make no more of the favour or diſpleaſure of God! Nay, may I not ſay, O the folly of the Children of God themſelves, that are no more in Gods Company, when they know they may be ſo welcome, when they have taſted ſo oft of his kindneſs, when they were made ſo much of the laſt time that they gave him a viſit. Are not men in a deep ſleep, that they do not hear? Are they not blind, that they do not ſee? Are they not ignorant, fooliſh, and mad, that they do not underſtand their intereſt any better? It is not without good reaſon, that the Spirit of God doth ſo oft cry out upon ſinners for their folly; the Scripture ſaith not in vain, *That there is none that hath underſtanding, no not one* No wonder that they which have but half a cure ſee men like trees, that thoſe which never had a through work, do not prize Chriſt. O but that thoſe which have been brought nigh by Grace, who were ſometimes afar off, that ſuch ſhould be ſo much ſtrangers; for thoſe that have met with ſuch kind entertainment at his houſe, for

theſe to keep off ſo, to come ſo ſeldom, for them which have fed ſo high at the Kings Table, to fall to their Traſh, their Husks, this is a ſhame indeed; as if the Devil kept a better houſe than God. Chriſtians, doth God deſerve this at your hands? How unkindly do you think he takes this from you? What will the world ſay? Look how his own acquaintance deſpiſe him? How will the Devil inſult? O how do the hearts of your fellow-Chriſtians ake, to ſee how ſtrange your carriage is? How do they tremble to think, what if that fine Houſe be built upon the Sand? Chriſtians, you which ſeldom or complementally viſit God, bethink your ſelves well what you do, when you begin to be cold in your affections to this Friend; remember from whence you are fallen, and repent, and do your firſt works; remember what entertainment you have ſometimes had at Gods Houſe; forget not all his Kindneſſes; of all the Creatures in the world, you have no cauſe to carry your ſelves ſo towards God. I tell you again, the World ſtands by, and looks on, to ſee what there is in you more than in others; they mark your lives more than you are aware of, it may be: Wherefore look to your ſelves, take heed how you carry your ſelves before them. O why ſhould they ſee your faces pale, when you may feed ſo highly? O ſhew them by your countenance, that you feed upon wholſome food! O let your breath ſmell ſweet, let your diſcourſe be more ſavoury of the things of God! Labour to maintain a ſweet, conſtant, unintermitted intercourſe

tercourſe with God, to walk with him. O little do you think what you loſe by your coming ſo ſeldom to this Friend. I appeal to your own experience; was not that diſh you eat laſt at his Table ſweet? And what do you think that God doth not ſtill keep as good a Houſe as he did? Do you believe that he hath ſpent all his beſt Wines? Can that Fountain ever be emptied? Is there not Bread and good Chear enough in your Fathers houſe? Believe it, God hath other kind of Entertainment, richer Chear, better Fare ſtill to make you welcome with, if you would not be ſo ſtrange, if you will but come oftener to him. As for Chriſtians, methinks I need not uſe ſo many words to perſwade you, methinks you that know how ſweet his company is, ſhould deſire to be never out of it. Chriſtians, I tell you plainly, if you ever expect true peace in your life, and true joy and comfort at death, it's your only way to keep cloſe to God, viſit him oft by ſecret Prayer and other kind of Duties, and then you ſhall ever and anon meet with that which will ſweeten your greateſt diligence, and abundantly make amends for your pains. Knock as his door, ask for him, and reſolve to ſtay till he comes; though he come not at the firſt, ſecond, or third knocking, yet I am ſure he is within, and will come at laſt, if you will but wait; and when you have once again met with him, O let him not go, but tell him ſeriouſly that you can't bear his abſence, he ſhall be your God and Friend living and dying, death if ſelf ſhall not part you. Go alſo and tell your

Friends, you have found him whom your ſoul loves, that you have met with Jeſus, and ſee if you can get them to to come out and ſee him, bid them to taſte and ſee how good the Lord is; commend him all you can to your poor Chriſt-leſs Friends. But you are not the perſons that I intended to ſpeak to, only thus a little by the by, that I may a little warm my own heart and yours, in this great duty of maintaining an intimate cloſe converſe and acquaintance with God. But my buſineſs is to go out into the High-ways and Hedges, and to invite poor wandering ſtrangers that have nothing to live upon themſelves, and that do not know what a noble open-houſe God keeps, that never taſted of his kindneſs in Chriſt to come to this Royal Feaſt, and to Eat their fill of ſuch food as they can never eat too much of, never be ſurfeited with. *Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is unto the ſons of men. O ye ſimple ones, underſtand wiſdom; and ye fools, be ye of an underſtanding heart,* Prov. 8. 4, 5. *Hear O ye deaf, and ſee O blind: let the dead hear the voice of God, and live.* Then hear what *I* have been ſpeaking of: *I* have almoſt done my meſſage, conſider well of theſe things, as you tender the diſpleaſure of God, as you value your Souls, be ſerious; remember what it is, that *I* have been diſcourſing to you about; Read it over again, and ſtudy on it; Read and Pray, Pray and Read, and turn this exhortation into Prayer; take with you words, and ſay: O that this might be the Sermon that might bring me acquainted with God! O that this might be the man that might bring me to ſome knowledg of Chriſt! O that this might be the happy day wherein a Match

may

may be concluded between my ſoul, and the precious Jeſus! But alas, alas, where are the hearts that are thus ſmitten? Where are the Souls that are any whit taken with this infinite Beauty? How few have any real love or good-will for Chriſt? O who hath believed our report, and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? Though I and many hundreds more, have been pleading thus with ſinners; though ſome of their Embaſſadors of peace weep bitterly, that their meſſage is no more kindly entertained, though their publick Preaching be followed with private Prayers and ſecret Groans; though they expoſtulate the caſe with poor refractory Creatures, with all the earneſtneſs that they can for their lives, though we uſe the moſt powerful arguments that we can, and deliver them with all the vehemency, ſeriouſneſs and compaſſion that we can for our Souls; Yet how are the greateſt part of our hearers unconcerned? Is not a great part of our Auditory as ſtupid and ſenceleſs, as the very ſtones they tread on? The more is our ſorrow, we fear as to the moſt of them that hear us, what we ſpeak, is loſt. It may be they may be a little affected juſt at the hearing, or for an hour or two; but O that theſe truths might have a lively, and abiding impreſſion on mens hearts! I fear, O that they were cauſeleſs fears! I fear that moſt of you that have heard of theſe things will go away, and quickly forget what weighty things you have heard; perhaps ſome of you may ſay, the man was very earneſt, and ſome of his Expreſſions were piercing. O Friends, I hope it is not your commendation that I deſire? O that I may with a ſingle heart, reſpect Gods glory! I

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ſay again, I would not be pleaſed with your praiſe, nor would I fear your diſpraiſe; it's your Souls I want, and may but I manage my great work in this ſucceſsfully, and ſee you acquainted with God, before I leave you for ever, I hope I ſhould be contented to be trod in the dirt. O that my heart may not deceive me! O that my compaſſion to your ſouls were greater, a thouſand times greater! O that I could never ſpeak to you of ſuch things as theſe without tears. I muſt again, and again, profeſs I am aſhamed of my heart, that it is no more ſenſible of theſe weighty affairs! But O mighty and glorious God, if thou pleaſeſt, thou canſt out of the mouth of a Babe and Suckling, ordain ſtrength! O that thou wouldeſt make the worm *Jacob* to threſh Mountains! O that thou wouldeſt make me of the moſt unworthy and weakeſt inſtrument, in that honourable Service of bringing home ſome *S*ouls to thy ſelf. O if but any one *S*oul, if but one *S*oul that was eſtranged from God, might by theſe lines be brought acquainted with him, if I might prevail with any other ſtubborn Enemy to lay down his weapons, and be Friends with him, I ſhould think my pains well beſtowed; though (if that will make you to regard it ever the more) this work hath coſt me many an hours ſtudy, and it hath been interrupted with many bodily diſtempers, groans and ſorrows, fears and ſighs. Yet if after all my travel, I may hear of any Children born of God; if I may meet but one ſoul the better for it, by it brought to Glory, I ſhall have abundant cauſe to bleſſe my God, and to rejoyce that my labour hath not been in vain in the Lord. But if I might have

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more, I ſhould have more cauſe to adore infinite Goodneſs, and rich Grace! O my dear Friends! O precious and immortal Souls! What ſhall I ſay to you? What ſhall I do for you? O did you but know how hardly I fetch my breath at this time, did you but ſee what a crazy Creature he is that writes to you; did you but know how faint he hath been ſometimes in ſpeaking to you, you would go nigh to pitty him. O pitty your ſelves! O pitty your own Souls, that ere long muſt be turned naked out of your Bodies, and hear the expoſtulations of a dying man that would gladly live with you in everlaſting glory, and meet you all among the Friends of the Bridegroom, that I may ſee you among the Sons of God; in your great meeting, when the Father ſhall ſend his Servants the Angels to fetch all his children home to his own houſe. O pitty your Souls, & let not all my pains be loſt, trample not under your feet the blood of the Covenant, neither count it a common thing: Remember that the ſlighting of Chriſt is a dangerous thing, the loſs of his favour; and the loſs of your ſoul, muſt go together! O how ſhall I leave you! How ſhall I part with you, ſhall I go before my work is done? What ſhall I ſay more? What arguments ſhall I further make uſe of? O that I knew what to ſay, that I might prevail! And are you ſtill reſolved to put me off with frivolous excuſes? Can you put off your conſciences thus? Are you ſtill contented to be Aliens and Strangers? If you are, know this, that I muſt leave theſe lines to bear witneſs againſt you; Remember this, that you were told of theſe things again and again. Thoſe that can forget Sermons

here, ſhall remember them hereafter? if you be not the bettter for this diſcourſe, you will curſe the day that ever your heard it; it will be a cutting reflection, when another day you ſhall ſay to your own Soul, at ſuch a time, ſuch a one did beſeech me in Chriſts ſtead to be reconciled to God, and I would not: Curſed man that I was! I made nothing of all the offers of Grace and Mercy, I made little account of theſe intollerable Torments which now make me to gnaſh my teeth. Hear, O unhappy Creature, that art yet alive, Be not ye paſt hope! O that thou mayeſt ſee thy ſad ſtate before it be quite paſt remedy! O let me take up a lamentation for thee, as one whoſe condition is beyond expreſſion deplorable! O that I could ſpeak as affectionately to you as one did lately, who ſpent his ſtrength and life amongſt you all, *viz.* That I can neither eat nor drink, nor ſleep quietly, whilſt I think of the danger that precious Souls run every moment, while they are unacquainted with God! O that mine eyes were waters, and my head a fountain of Tears, that I might weep day and night for poor Chriſt-leſs Creatures, that laugh and are as cheerful as if no danger were near them, whereas that diſmal day approaches apace, wherein they muſt bid an everlaſting farewel to all their pleaſures, and lie down for ever under the ſcalding wrath of an angry God! O ſtand aſtoniſhed O Heavens, and wonder O Earth! Here's a man that had rather be a Beaſt than a man, a Devil than a Saint, that prefers Hell before Heaven, that loves Death and hates Life; Here's a man that makes nothing of going to Hell, Damnation is a thing that he jeſts with; 'tis but

damning

damning, he ſaith: But damning! Is that ſo light a thing, a thing to be laughed at? Well, if that damning be nothing, never complain of it, when you feel it: If it be nothing, never groan nor bite your tongue, nor gnaſh your teeth for it: If Heaven, and your Soul, the favour of God, eternal happineſs, be ſuch ſmall matters, never complain for the loſs of them. Well then, belike you are pleaſed very well with your choice, and you do chooſe rather to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin, for a moment, than the pleaſures of Holineſs, which laſt for ever. There ſtands a ſinner that hears all this, and frets and foameth at the hearing of it; it's a torture to his Soul to be within the ſound of ſuch Truths? Why, act like one in his wits: If the hearing of Hell and Damnation be ſo troubleſome, what will the feeling of it be think'ſt thou? But that I may, if poſſible, prevail, I ſhall leave a few ſerious queſtions with you, which I charge you in the preſence of God, ſeriouſly to conſider of, and to give a wiſe anſwer to theſe following Queſtion.

Queſt. 1. Are thoſe things which you have heard, true, or are they not? Doth not the Scriptures ſpeak the ſame things which I do? Dare you ſay that the Word of Truth is Falſe? Do but open the Bible, dip where you will, what is that you read there? Is is not ſomething that hath a Tendency to what I have been teaching of? O that you would but give your ſelves the trouble of ſearching the Scriptures, to ſee whether theſe things are ſo. To vvhat purpoſe do you think ſhould we ſpend our breath? To what purpoſe ſhould we followv you vvith ſuch Exhortations, if vve had not ſome grounds for vvhat

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we ſay? If there be no ſuch thing in the word of God, why then do you not ſay ſo? Why, do you not ſhew us it, if there be ſuch a place that ſaith; there is no need of repentance, that mans condition is ſafe enough already, and that he may do well enough, though he be never reconciled to God? Do you think that we take delight in vexing men and women? Do you conceive that it pleaſeth us to diſpleaſe you, and to get your hatred? Do you not believe that a great many of us, if it might conſiſt with Gods honour and your welfare, had not far rather be excuſed? Can any man imagine that ſo many thouſands of Prophets, Apoſtles, and Miniſters, in ſuch diſtant ages, and in ſuch diſtant places, ſhould all agree in this, to impoſe a falſity upon the world? Would any man be ſo mad as to invent ſuch things as theſe, which are ſo contrary to mens diſpoſitions, if he had not abundant warrant from God himſelf? Is it poſſible that men ſhould make ſuch complaints, and ſhed ſo many tears, and be in ſuch agonies about theſe things, if there were nothing at all in them? Are all the experiences of ſo many thouſands of Saints, but meer fancies? Speak Chriſtian, ſpeak, What do you ſay to this? Are all thy joys, thy anſwers of Prayers, thoſe ſweet diſhes that thou haſt ſometimes fed upon, but dreams? Doth not thy very blood ſtir in thee, at the very putting ſuch a queſtion to thee? Canſt thou not ſay, that thou haſt ſeen, that thou haſt felt, and that thou haſt known undoubtedly, that Spiritual things are realities, the greateſt realities in the world, and that thou haſt been as much affected with them as ever thou wert with the things of ſenſe? Let me, the

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meaneſt of ten thouſand, tell the ſtiffeſt Atheiſt in the world, that I have ſeen theſe things ſo realized, that I ſhall ſooner believe that I am turned to a ſtone, or am dead, than believe that Spirituals are nullities and faneies. I am confident if there be any credit to be given to both eyes, and ears, then theſe things are true; and had you ſeen but what I have ſeen in dying Saints, and heard what I have heard, you would eaſily have been convinced, that there is ſomething in communion with God, ſomething in ſpiritual Joys. I am ſure, if there be any truth in the Scriptures, if the word of God be true, if Chriſt and the Apoſtles were not all miſtaken, then theſe things are true. If I ſhould tell you a buſineſs that did concern your Houſe, or your Children, or Body, or any worldly thing whatever, upon my own perſonal knowledg, would you not readily aſſent to what I ſay? I am perſwaded you would be far from ſuſpecting the truth of what I affirmed; I am ready to think, that there is none of you all that think that I dare tell you that which is falſe. O then, Why will you not believe me in a buſineſs of far greater conſequence? And if you ask me to what purpoſe do I ſpend ſo much time for nothing? What need I ſpeak at this rate? What will I make Infidels of you all? What do I think that you are ſuch Atheiſts, as not to believe that the word of God is true? Well then, you your ſelves are witneſſes that the word of God is true, and that you do believe all that is contained in it; and by rational inferences deduced from it: I ſhall therefore take it for granted, that you give your aſſent to theſe things, if you be Chriſtians in profeſſion, your very Name ſpeaks as much;

much. Now my next Queſtion ſhall be this.

Queſt. 2. Are theſe things of weight and importance, or are they not? You hear that they are matters that concern your eternal life or death, Soul affairs; and are not theſe matters of the greateſt conſequence? If acquaintance with God, the happineſs or miſery of a Soul, your making or undoing for ever, be inconſiderable things, What then are great things? Is it a matter of greater importance, to loſe the ſight of a laſcivious Play? Is it an affair of greater weight to have the frowns of a wanton miſtriſs, or the frown of a God? You ſaid even now, that the word of God was true, if you will ſtand to that, I deſire no more; How is it written? Read a verſe or two, turn to Matthew 5. 20. *Except your righteouſneſs exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, you ſhall in no caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven:* And John. 3. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.* And God will pour out his wrath upon the Heathen, and upon the Families that call not upon his Name. Doth not the Scripture ſay, that is the one thing neceſſary? Are not theſe things called by the Lord Chriſt, the weightier things? *Mat.* 23. 23. I hope you will not ſay, that God is miſtaken, and that the Scripture ſpeaks more of theſe matters than needs: What are you gone from your word ſo ſoon; did you not ſay that the word of God was true, and are you now of another mind, becauſe you find that it requires more ſtrictneſs, you are willing to ſubmit to? But are you aſhamed of that, and are you convinced of this alſo, that the Doctrine of

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Reconciliation, Acquaintance, and Peace with God, are affairs of the highest importance in the world? And do you indeed believe this? and will you stand to it? well then, my next Question shall be this.

Quest. 3. What do you mean then to mind such things as you acknowledge to be most unquestionably true, and of the greatest consequence, with so much indifferency and coldness? what reason have you then for your strange neglect in your prosecution of them? what, say they are the greatest things in the world, and will you say they are least to be looked after? Is it any Prudence and Wisdom to be very serious about trifles, and to trifle about the most serious things? Are Heaven, the love of God, and the like, by your own confession the most weighty, and will you make light of them? O folly and Hypocrisie! *Out of thy own mouth thou shalt be condemned.* Dost know that Heaven and Hell are before you? dost thou know that the one is unspeakably glorious, and the other unspeakably dreadful? and yet for all this dost thou stand demurring which of these thou shouldest choose? and darest thou for all this venture on in a way which leads to the region of Eternal Darkness? and though those that know the way better than you, and see you ride on so hastily and merrily, call after you with earnestness, yet dost thou still turn thy back upon them? Consider whether you act in these affairs, like one that is well in his wits. Is God the best friend in the world, and yet his kindness least to be regarded? Man, what hast thou to say for thy self? O What brutes, and how irrational are men in their spiritual matters! how

do they contradict themselves! how do they say one thing, and do the quite contrary! O let me in a word or two renew my Expostulation with them which are loath to be accounted fools? What reason hast thou to undervalue the favour of God so as you do? what reason have you thus foolishly to cast away your selves, and to slight acquaintance with your Maker? Let me plead with you in the language of a Reverend Divine (*R. B.*) of our own. Look up your best and strongest Reasons; and if you see a man put his hand into the fire till it burn off, you'l marvell at it: but this is a thing that a man may have reason for, as Bishop *Crammer* had when he burnt off his hand for subscribing to Popery. If you see a man cut off a Leg or an Arm, it's a sad sight; but this is a thing that a man may have good reason for, as many a man doth it to save his life. If you see a man give his body to be burnt to ashes, and to be tormented with Strappado's and Racks, and refuse deliverance when it is offered: this is a hard case to flesh and bloud, but this a man may have good reason for, as you see in *Heb.* 11. 33, 34, 35, 36. and as many an hundred Martyrs have done. But for a man to forsake the Lord that made him, for a man to run into the fire of Hell when he is told of it, and intreated to turn that he might be saved; this is a thing that can have no reason in it, that is reason indeed, to justifie or excuse it. For Heaven will pay for the loss of any thing that we can lose to get it, or for any labour that we bestow for it; but nothing can pay for the loss of Heaven. Read on in Mr. *R B's Call to the Unconverted.* pag. 169. Do you still believe the Word of God

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to be true, and the things contained in it to be the moſt weighty, and yet will you ſtill paſs them over, as if there were nothing at all in them?

Queſt. 4. My next Queſtion that I ſhall propound to you, and deſire your ſerious and ſpeedy anſwer to, is this, Do you believe that you can find a better friend then God? can you mend your ſelf any where elſe? is there in Heaven or Earth any that can do as much for you as God can? is there any one that can take you off when you come to be accuſed for High Treaſon againſt the King of Heaven, and to be arraigned before that juſt Judge? have you got that which will quit your coſt in getting of it, and countervail the loſs of a Soul? what is it that ſtill hath an intereſt in your heart, that is thought to be an equal competitor with God for your deareſt love? If it be indeed that which will ſhield you from the arreſts of Death, and the wrath of the Almighty; if it be that which can ſhelter you from the ſtorm of his diſpleaſure; if it be that which will do you as much good as Heaven, and make you as happy as God can; why then I have little to ſay; make your beſt of it. But conſider well what you do firſt, be ſure that you be not miſtaken; have not many thought as you think, and have found their miſtake when it was too late?

Queſt. 5. Do you think that this world will laſt always with you? do you not believe that ere long you muſt die, and your ſoul appear before God, and by him be ſentenced to its everlaſting ſtate? where is all the glory of thoſe great Monarchs which deſpiſed God and oppreſſed his people? what is become of all their pomp? which

of them that flouriſhed three thouſand years ago ſtand alive now in glory? and are you better than they? ſhall the worms which have made a prey of them, ſpare you? is Death more favourable now-a-days, than he was before? is not the world ſtill as it was, but vanity? is not all fleſh ſtill but graſs, and the beauty of it as a flower that is cut down and withereth ſuddenly? Well then, this being granted, that nothing is more certain than Death, and that it is appointed for all men once to die; would you not then be glad of ſomething that will ſtand you inſtead after death, a Friend in another world? why then do you not ſpeedily get acquainted with him who alone can befriend you in that dreadful hour!

Queſt. 6. What do you think will become of you, if after all this you go on in your old ways? what will become of you do you think if you ſhould die without the knowledge of God? what hopes have you of life in peace, if you bid defiance to the Lord of life, and contemn the Prince of peace? how ſhall you eſcape if you neglect ſo great ſalvation? what do you think that thoſe which did once as you do now, ſlight Chriſt, and never look after Reconciliation with God, are now a doing in another world? what would you do in this caſe? ſhould one come to you either out of Heaven, or out of Hell, how wonderfully do you think you ſhould be affected with the Narration which they would give you of the affairs of the inviſible world? why then will you not now be affected with what we ſay? for aſſure your ſelves, whatever you may think, our teſtimony is as true, and hath a better foundation of credit, than if one ſhould tell you he came

came from the dead, and ſpeak to you of theſe things.

Queſt. 7. Another Queſtion I would propound to you, is this; Are you willing to bear the diſpleaſure of God? can you undergo the weight of that wrath which made his back to ake, who was mighty to do and ſuffer? can you with any patience hear that dreadful word pronounced by the mouth of that Judg, which will ſee to the execution of his ſentence, *Depart from me ye curſed unto everlaſting torment; Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, for I know you not?* Can you endure without any trouble that ſcalding hot wrath which is abundantly more painful than Fire and Brimſtone, more intolerable than to be ſhut up in a burning fiery Furnace, or to be boyled in a Caldron of melted Lead, or whatſoever torments the wit of men or Devils can invent? Can you with any patience bear the Stone, Gout, Tooth-ach, Chollick, or ſome ſuch diſtempers of body which laſt but for a while? O how long do you think the time when you are in that condition? how do you toſs and tumble? what lamentable moan do you make? do not you think you can't be too much pitied in that condition? how then will you be able to lie down in thoſe torments, the leaſt drop of which is abundantly more painful than the greateſt torment that ever you felt in your life? If theſe ſeem dreadful to you, why do you not go the way to avoid them? which is by getting an intereſt in him who hath the Keys of Hell at his girdle; for there is no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, to them that are brought into a ſtate of Reconciliation and Acquaintance with God by his Son our Mediatour.

Queſt. 8. Are you contented to loſe everlaſting happineſs? Can you willingly ſee *Abraham*, and *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and a great many from all the quarters of the world, to ſit down in the Kingdom of Heaven, and your ſelves caſt out? how do you like to have thoſe which you ſcorned to look upon, to be ſet at the Table at the Feaſt, and your ſelf ſhut out with the Dogs? would you not be glad to have a word of comfort ſpoke to you, when your ſoul is juſt a taking its leave of your body? would you not be glad then to be conveyed by the bleſſed Angels into the preſence of God, and to be crowned with an immortal and glorious Crown? would it do you any harm to be perfect in holineſs and happineſs when you die? would you not be glad to be ſaved when others ſhall be damned? In a word, do you not deſire to be rejoycing and praiſing of God in endleſs pleaſures, when others ſhall be weeping & curſing of God in endleſs torments? why then do not you live the lives of the righteous, if you would die their deaths, and have your latter end like theirs? if you would be glorious and happy for ever, why do you not endeavour to be holy and ſpiritual in time? if you would have God your Friend in another world, what do you mean that you labour no more to be acquainted vvith him in this vvorld?

Queſt. 9. Hovv vvould you take it at any mans hands, to be ſerved as you ſerve God? Suppoſe you ſhould take up a poor Child that came to your door to beg, that had ſcarce a rag to cover his nakedneſs, nor a morſel of bread to put into his mouth, and no vvhere to hide his head; Suppoſe you ſhould ſtrip this poor beggar of his rags

and

and cloath him in very good apparrel, and take him into your own house, and take as much care of him, as if he were your own child: suppose after this you should bid him do you some small piece of service, and he in stead of it should say, *Command your man, and do your work your self*; and instead of answering your kindness, should offer you the greatest abuse in the world, and afterwards conspire with a company of Rogues to rob & murther you, how would you like this? should you think that such a fellow as this did not deserve a halter rather then your favour? But now, if after this you should send after this ungrateful wretch, and tell him, that you are willing to forget all that is past, and to receive him into the greatest favour, and never to cast his former wickedness in his teeth; how would you take it at his hands, if he should stand I know not how long disputing whether he should accept of your kindness or no, whether he should choose the Gaol, and Gallows, or your House? but if after all this you should send messenger after messenger, and offer to give him all that you have in the World, and to bestow your only Daughter upon him, and to settle presently a great Estate upon him with her; how would you take it if this vile ungrateful beggar should put you off a great while together with some poor excise or other? how would you like it if he should make light of all your offers, and tell you he thanks you for nothing, and should undervalue your kindness? Would you not soon resolve not to trouble your self any longer with such an unthankful monster? would you not let him take his course, and not much pity him, if he afterwards see the dif-

ference between a Fathers houſe and Gaol, between Liberty and a Priſon, between Riches, Glory and Pleaſure, and Poverty, Diſhonour and Sorrows? would you not bid him never expect kindneſs more at your hands; but ſeeing he would not be ruled, to take what follows? What do you ſay, would you not do thus? I am perſwaded you would. But ſhould I unriddle this Parable, who do you think would be condemned? your own mouth would accuſe you, and you would be your own Judg. Thou art that man that haſt dealt thus diſingeniouſly with God, thou art that beggar to whom the Lord hath ſhewed much kindneſs, and offered more; he hath ſent meſſenger after meſſenger, and at laſt he hath ſent his Son to invite thee to his own houſe, and he offers to make you as happy as Heaven, Glory and happineſs it ſelf can make you, and you ſtand ſtill demurring, and add one delay to another, and are far from that grateful and ſpeedy compliance which the nature of the thing doth require; and in ſtead of coming at Gods call, and a thankful owning of his marvellous kindneſs, how baſely doſt thou prefer thy company, thy luſt before him, and offer the moſt intolerable affronts to his Majeſty, and make nothing of his unparalel'd goodneſs, and continueſt in open rebellion againſt him? What then haſt thou to ſay for thy ſelf, why God ſhould not with a juſt abhorrency caſt thee off for ever? But now that God ſhould ſtill offer thee as high as ever,& (in ſtead of doing as I have ſaid, and as you your ſelf would have done in caſe of a leſs contempt) ſtill follow you with ſuch a gracious propoſal as this is, that I now make unto you;

is it not a miracle of mercy, a prodigy of kindneſs?

Queſt. 10. And now what will you do? Will you ſtill for all this go on in your contempt of God? Will you ſtill refuſe to know him, and never mind acquaintance with him? Will you ſtill be indifferent whether you have God for your Friend, or your enemy? Now you have been tendred ſuch a match, will you make another choice, will you beſtow your heart ſomewhere elſe? And when you have done that, dare you ſtand to your choice, and ſay, that you have done very wiſely in refuſing God, and in imbracing this preſent world? Will you maintain it at the day of judgement, that you have done well to refuſe acquaintance with himſelf, and to run the hazard of his diſpleaſure? But you will not, you ſay, trouble your head with ſuch melancholy fancies as theſe are; they are enough to put a man beſides his wits; you hope to do as well as others, and ſo long you care not. Well then, it ſeems you are reſolved; though, let me tell you, if you are contented to fare as moſt ſhall fare at laſt, you muſt be contented to be damned; for the Scripture is exceeding clear in this, that the number of thoſe that go to Heaven, is a very ſmall number; and if you will not take my word for it, (for indeed I would not that you ſhould take my word, nor any mans breathing without warrant from Gods word, in things of ſo high a nature) look into the Scripture, and at your leiſure, ponder a while upon theſe following Texts, *Luke* 13. 23, 24. *Then ſaid one unto him, Lord, are there few that ſhall be ſaved? And he ſaid unto them, Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, for*

many

many I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able, Mat. 20. 16. *Many art called, but few are choſen.* And *Luke* 12 32. Chriſt ſaith, his flock is a little flock. And the Church complains of the fewneſs of her number in this Language. *Mic.* 7 1. *Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the ſummer fruits.* I might heap up abundance of Scriptures, of the ſame nature, all which ſpeak this to us; that it is not ſo common a thing to go to Heaven as moſt people reckon upon. But yet if thou be reſolved, come what will come, not to change your mind; if after ſo many warnings and pleadings, you ſtill continue of this judgement; I muſt ſpeak a dreadful word, Your Blood be upon your own Soul. I have blown the Trumpet, I have done what in me lies to convince thee of thy dangerous ſtate, while thou art a ſtranger to God, and to bring thee to a ſpeedy acquaintance with him; but thou haſt after many, and many a tender given in this anſwer, that as for God thou doſt not deſire to be acquainted with him, as for your matching with his Son, it's that which thou careſt not for hearing of, except thou mighteſt have his eſtate without his Soveraignty; thou wilt not have him for thy husband, except he will let thee do as thou liſt, and run a whoring from him when thou pleaſeſt; Thou wilt not have Heaven, except thou mayſt have it without holineſs; and as for the invitations of God, thou ſtill makeſt light of them, neither promiſes nor threatnings ſignifie much with you. Well then, when you find by woful experience what you have done, know whom you muſt lay all the blame on. I call Heaven and Earth to record, and you your ſelves are wit-

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neſſes, that I have with all the pity and earneſtneſs that I could for my ſoul told you of theſe great things: but you think the flattering offers that the Devil makes to be more advantagious then thoſe which God makes, and his ſervice to be preferred before the ſervice of Chriſt, and the friendſhip of the world to be eſteemed before the friendſhip of God, and the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon you value before thoſe rivers of pleaſures which are at the right hand of God for evermore. Now, if you continue in this mind, blame not me if you miſcarry for ever; you muſt whether you will or no ſtand to your choice. Do not ſay but you were told of theſe things; this is not the firſt time by many, but it may be the laſt that you may ever hear for all that I know. Remember you were once well offered. Do you think that God will always bare with ſuch unworthy abuſes? ſhall Gods Juſtice never be righted? yes, yes, be not deceived, ſlighted kindneſſes will coſt dear at laſt. What have you yet to ſay for your ſelf? do you think that I mean you any hurt by all this? except you count Salvation a wrong, and kindneſs it ſelf an injury. But if all this will not do, go then and make the beſt thou canſt of all thy Friends; let us ſee how well, and how long they will entertain thee: ere a few dayes it may be, ſhall be at an end, we ſhall hear how you like your choice; when they ſhall turn you out of doors, and tell you plainly, they can do nothing for you, you muſt ſhift as well as you can; as for them, they cant't provide for themſelves, much leſs for you. And then let's ſee who hath made the beſt choice, he that is acquainted with God, and choſen him

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for his Friend, or he that hath taken the world for his friend? Let's see who will do most for their friends, when a time of trial comes. When Heaven and Earth are all in a Flame, when the Trumpet is sounding, when the Judge and his Attendants, Christ and all his holy Angels, are coming, when the Prisons the Graves are opened, and the Prisoners are brought forth, then let's see who will have the chearfullest countenance, he that holdeth up his hand at the bar, or they that sit upon the bench with the Judge: for know you not that the Saints, the Friends of the Judge, shall sit with him when he judgeth the world? We shall know when the storm riseth whose house was best, that which was built upon the sand, or that which was built upon the rock. O that people were now of the same mind, that they will be of at the day of Judgement! O that they would consider, that if they will not now be at leisure to think of these things, they shall be at leisure to repent of them hereafter. Do not talk of scorns, and reproaches, and suffering, what, do you think that Heaven will not make amends for all that? which is most to be feared, the scorns of God, or the scorns of men? which will do you most hurt, mans contempt, or Gods? where is the man that will be laughed out of a great estate? because a fool saith, that a Jewel is not worth the taking up, will you therefore never stoop to take it up? The truth of it is, if you intend to make any thing of your Profession, you must be willing to be counted a fool, and a mad man: but you must remember, it is by those that are so themselves. O be not affrighted from your duty by the talk of the rabble. If the

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thing be evil, let the vice of it ſcare you; but if it be good, let not the fear of them which are very incompetent judges in ſuch a caſe divert you from it. Do you think that ſuch poor excuſes will be taken at the day of Judgement? What do you intend to ſay to God then? Lord, I would have laboured to have known thee, I would have taken ſome care of my ſoul, and I would have taken ſome pains about the things of Eternity, but that I ſaw that almoſt every one that did with any ſeriouſneſs look after ſuch matters, were ſcorned, laughed at, &c. When I had got into the company of thoſe that were godly, and I had half a mind to go with them to Heaven, then my friends fell a jeering of me, and ask'd me whether I meaned to be mad, to undo my ſelf, to turn Puritan and Phanatick? Do you, I ſay, believe that ſuch a plea will ſtop the mouth of the Judge, and keep him from pronouncing the ſentence againſt you? will this hold the hands of Juſtice? will the thoughts of this quench or cool the dreadful flames? Be better adviſed, O be better adviſed for your ſouls ſake, and conſider how ſuch creatures will befool themſelves. Who would upon ſuch a trifle part with Heaven? that would be laughed out of Glory, and jeered into Hell? Is your mind yet altered? have you any thoughts or reſolutions to look after your ſoul and acquaintance with God? Are there none of you all that ask by this time, what ſhall I do to be acquainted with God? are there none of you that begin to think that it is high time to look out for a Friend in a time of need? have I all this while been beating the air, and laboured in vain? ſhall I leave you all as I found you?

you? God forbid. Methinks I hear some poor souls crying out by this time, O that I had but such a Friend that would bring me acquainted with God! O that I had but a saving knowledg of JesusChrist! O that I did but understand what it means to have Communion with the Father and the Son, through the Spirit! I see my self undone and lost for ever, except I have an Interest in this Friend. O who will bring me to him? How shall I get acquainted with him? O that is a sweet language! That's a very good question, *What shall I do to be saved?* but do you speak in sober sadness? do you speak in jest or in earnest? If any one would give you advice and direction, would you follow it in spite of all the opposition of Hell: What do you say, will you labour to keep exactly to those Directions that shall be given? if you will, I do not question but that you and God will be acquainted before you die. But, O let not me take a great deal of pains and all to little purpose, as to you; do not now serve me as the *Jews* did *Jeremiah*, come and ask Counsel of God, and take the Devils. But in hopes that some poor souls may in good earnest desire Directions with an intent to follow them, I shall give them as follows.

I. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, labour to get a through sense of your great estrangment from him, and of the danger of such an estrangement. This is that which makes people so well contented with their condition, because they see no great evil nor danger in it. Men are ready to

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think very well of their condition, although they be enemies to God, and no Friends to Christ. Enemies to God! they scorn your words, though all this while they express the greatest contempt of him conceivable; though they regard neither his Commands, Threatnings, nor Promises, though they value the company of a drunkard, a whore, before the company of God; though they do all that they can against God, Love nothing that he loves; though they side with Gods greatest enemies, yet they abhor to be thought to be any others then well-wishers to Christ, and the Friends and Servants of God; though they never come near God, yet they take it very ill if they be not reckoned amongst his acquaintance, and speciall Friends. Where is the professor almost living, that doth not count it a high piece of uncharitableness, if one do not Canonize them among the Saints, though they live more like bruites! How hainously do they take it, if any one do but question their state? They ignorant of God! They enemies to the Cross of Christ! they blind! they unconverted! Who is that man which dare question their condition? They hope to fare as well as any precise Puritan of them all, they will hope to be saved; say what you will then, you shall never beat them out of their trust in God. And though in Faithfulness to their Souls, we beg of them to make a more diligent inquiry into the state of their Souls, because we know that the heart is so deceitful, and we have very great cause to suspect that they know not God; yet they will go on very cheerfully with this confidence, untill Christ himself shew them their mistake, and tell them plainly that he knows

knows them not, and that he never accounted them any of his Friends. But now did men but throughly understand their natural estrangement from God, were they but indeed sensible of the vileness of their hearts, did they but take notice of the Rebellions and Treasons that are within, the case would be far otherwise with them than it is, O this, this is the reason why so many millions of professors miscarry everlastingly, and never come to desire the friendship of God, because they never believed that they were any otherwise than friends, they do not suspect themselves at all, but think that they are rich and encreased in goods, and have need of nothing, whereas the Lord knows, and Christians know too, that they are poor, and blind, and naked. But now, when men begin to be thorowly sensible of this enmity that is in their natures against God; when they see what mutinies and rebellions there are in them against their most gracious Lord and King; and when they are made to understand the consequences of this War, then how sensibly do they cry out, what shall they do? was there ever any poor wretched creatures in worse condition than themselves? was ever any ones heart worse than theirs? are there any out of hell that are such Monsters of sin as they are? O what shall they do? they see the Fire kindled, and themselves hanging over everlasting burnings: now all the world for a Christ; they believe now that God and Man are not equals; that there is no contending with the Almighty: who can stand before his indignation? and when they see Gods Sword drawn, and the poynt of it set against their heart, when they behold the terrours of the

Lord ſetting themſelves in array againſt them and themſelves like to loſe all, then how welcome would the news of a Parly be? How glad would they be then to hear of a Pardon? Then down go their weapons; they will ſooner come before God with a Halter about their Necks, than a Sword by their ſides; they will fight now with no other weapons but Tears and Prayers: As for their Armour, they break it in pieces, and lay it at the feet of their offended Prince; and O if they might but have any hopes of pardon, it would revive their hearts; if they might have but a look of kindneſs from God, it would be a greater comfort to them than all the whole World beſide; could afford them. To whom can a skilful Phyſitian be more welcome, than to the ſick? Chriſt came to ſeek the loſt, and ſuch as theſe we are ſent to encourage: But till the ſoul comes to this paſs, a Chriſt is not valued at all by it: If ſinners be not made thus to underſtand themſelves, why though we ſhould plead with never ſo much earneſtneſs with them, we do but beat the air; all that we can ſay ſignifies very little. The man thinks his great work is done, though his hands have been all this while in his boſome; he is far onwards in his Journey to Heaven, though he never ſet one ſtep out of his own doors; he hath an intereſt in God, and is very well acquainted with him, and hath an aſſured confidence of his condition, that he ſhall be happy, though he have not one drachm of grace. He is a good Churchman, he hath ſat at the Lords Table, and the like: But O how many are there which ſhall ſee, and know that it is more than poſſible, to come oft before God, and to complement him much,

and to ſit oft at his Table, and yet not to be any of his peculiar Friends, and ſpecial Acquaintance; now if ever you would make any thing of Religion, & be made highly to praiſe Gods favour & to be really acquainted with him; you muſt labour to underſtand your diſtance from him, and the unconceivable hazard that you run, while you are in a ſtate of Separation from God; that there is but one ſtep between you, and the ſtate of the Damned; for what would become of you, if God ſhould ſay to you, this night thy Soul ſhall be required of you. How eaſily can God in a moment ſtop your breath, and ſend your Soul and Body into that lake that burns for ever & ever? & is it not then time for you to look about you? O this ignorance of our ſelves, how doth it expoſe us? (*Ar. Epict. l.* 1. c. 25) He was not a whit miſtaken, who ſaid, *That the not knowing of our ſelves, was one of the chiefeſt cauſes of our ſin and miſery, and that the conſideration of the ſtate of the Soul, and the through underſtanding it's depravedneſs, was the beginning of Wiſdom; for it's weakneſs being well known, a man will not afterwards, truſt it in the determination of the greateſt things; but man will deſirous to conſult that great Oracle, the will of his Maker; and finding his old guide is blind, and hath oft miſſed him, thereupon he is the readier to be acquainted with ſuch a one, who may direct him in the way to true happineſs.* If you would therefore be acquainted with God, you muſt get well acquainted with your ſelves: you will upon the knowledg of your ſelf be afraid of your ſelf. He was none of the weakeſt men who ſaid, *That a true ſenſe of folly is no ſmall ſign of ſome proficiency in wiſdom.* Look into thy ſelf, O man, ſearch every

corner

corner, behold what abundance of Armour, there is in such and such a dark Cellar; but is this Armour strong enough to encounter a God withal? Can'st thou with these Fig-leaves defend thy self against the arrowes of the Almighty? behold what a condition thou art in, if thou stirrest a step further. Yield speedily, and throw down thine Arms, or you are a dead man. Do you know this? do you really believe this? Is it possible? what believe that your Treason is found out, and that you are within a little of Execution, and yet not tremble, & yet not seek nor desire pardon. When a man throughly understands how things stand between him & God, and how unable he is to carry on a War against him, he will speedily cast about, how he may conclude a Peace upon any terms. As soon as *Benhadad* knew what a condition his Army was in, when he saw the Crowns of his thirty Kings shaken, and his warlike Captains cut in pieces, or to tremble, & be like women, when instead of a mighty Army of gallant Warriors in martial order, behaving themselves bravely in the field, he saw their carcases upon heaps, their garments rolled in blood, the Shields of his mighty Ones cast away, and himself wofully deserted, how speedily doth he send away his Servants, with Ropes about their Necks, to beg Peace upon any Terms? When the *Gibeonites* heard what dangerous fighting it was against *Joshuah*, they were not long before they made means to make a Covenant with him. So the Soul, when it doth seriously consider what a sad Condition it is in, while it continues in Rebellion against God; it's impossibility to stand it out long, and utter inability to conquer him: When it perceives the de-

ſigns of Satan, who firſt cauſed this difference between the Soul and God, and hath ſtill inſtigated and ſtirred it up to perſecute with all the violence that might be; I ſay, when the Soul ſees this before it is quite too late! O how doth it bewail it's condition, how doth it cry out, O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me! O what will become of me, if I make War ſtill againſt God? And as for flying, whether ſhall I fly from his preſence, and where ſhall I Hide my ſelf out of his ſight? And how ſhall I look him in the face, whom I have thus deſperately and ungratefully oppoſed? Can ſuch a Traytor as I poſſibly expect any mercy; if the Lord ſhould look upon me, and not immediately caſt me into Hell, it would be a miracle of Patience. And thus the man that begins a little to underſtand himſelf ſpeaks to himſelf; and after that, he with *Ephraim*, ſmites upon his thigh, and bemoans his condition exceedingly! O that he ſhould ever take up Arms againſt his gracious Prince! O what ſhall become of him? Well, I have heard that the God of Heaven is a merciful King, I will go and caſt my ſelf at his feet, if I periſh, I periſh. If I continue in this rebellion, there is no hopes; If I fly there is no eſcaping; and if I yield, I can but periſh! O ſad, ſad is my condition, Woe and alas, what ſhall I do in theſe dreadful perplexities: But, why do I ſtay here? The avenger of blood followes after me apace; well, I go to my God, through Chriſt, and I have heard that this is the only way, and that there is not the leaſt hope in the world, any other way to get a pardon, to eſcape the Wrath to come. O that the precious and merciful Jeſus would pitty me,

and

and ſtand my Friend now if ever! O that he would ſpeak a good word for me. *Have mercy upon me, Jeſus thou Son of* David *have mercy upon me!* O make peace for me, by thy blood; if thou wilt, thou canſt do more with a word ſpeaking, than all the Saints and Angels in the world; if ever any poor Creature in the world had need of mercy, then have I. O mercy, mercy, mercy for thy bloods ſake! But becauſe I ſhall ſpeak to this under another Direction, I ſhall be the briefer. Now when a man is at this paſs, he is in a fair way for peace; but now as long as a man is ignorant of all this, he is quite in another note, he will never buckle, and therefore he ſhall be broken. Therefore conſider well your condition, obſerve the actings of your own Soul; if you be one of the Friends and Acquaintance of God, what means your breaking and hating of his Spiritual Laws? What's the reaſon, if you love God, that you can take no delight at all in his company, no pleaſure in his Sabbaths? If you are a Friend of God, how hap you come no oftner to his houſe, when he dwells ſo near you? Why do you knock no oftner at his door? Why are you ſo rare in your viſits? Is this your kindneſs? Is this like a Friend? How comes it to paſs that there are ſo many Arms found hid in your houſe? What are they all for? What is the meaning of all thoſe Meetings that you give to Go's Enemies? What do all thoſe whiſperings, plots, and projects ſignifie? Is this friendſhip? Can you mean any good by all this? What do you ſay of your condition? Do you ever complain, and that feelingly of your enmity againſt God? Did you ever obſerve what a deſperate wicked ſpirit you

have againſt your Maker; and were you ever made ſenſible of the danger of ſuch a ſtate, and aſhamed and grieved to the very ſoul that you ſhould ever engage againſt ſo good a God? why then I am confident you can't but cry out with all the ſtrength and earneſtneſs of your ſoul for a peace, you can't but deſire to meet with your adverſary quickly, while he is in the way. But if you ſee nothing at all of the Treachery and Baſeneſs that is in your heart, ſearch, and ſearch again, it's your Ignorance and Blindneſs, and not the goodneſs of your ſtate, that makes you to know nothing by your ſelf. What, are you better than *David*? he was ſo jealous of his own heart, that he dared not to truſt to his own Examination of it, but he deſires the great Heart-ſearcher to help him in this work. Are you more excellent than *Paul* after his Converſion? Had he more reaſon to complain of himſelf than you have? O be at leiſure to look within, and get *Davids* Candle & Lanthorn to go into thoſe dark corners of your ſoul with it, and it may be you may ſee that within which may make your heart to ake, and your joynts to quiver, and your ſpirits to faint within you. *Paul* was ſometime as confident as you: he took no notice of the Enmity that was within againſt God, though he was as full of it as an Aſp is of Poyſon; yet before he came acquainted with God, the caſe was altered with him, he was of another mind when that light ſhined about him, & he cried out, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do*? he now thinks it is *hard kicking againſt the Pricks*, dangerous oppoſing of God, and perſecuting of Chriſt in any of his Members; and he deſires nothing in the world

world so much as to be reconciled to God, and to have him for his friend, whom before he fought against as an Enemy.

II. DIRECTION.

My next *Direction* to those which would be acquainted with God, shall be this: Get an humble heart, which is the consequent of the former. God will exalt none to this high honour of being his Friends, but such as have low Thoughts of themselves. The humble are the persons that he will raise, these are they that he will converse most with, these are the great Favourites of Heaven which God doth delight to honour, *Psal.* 34. 18. *The Lord is nigh to them which are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.* God is nigh to them, (with Reverence be it spoken) God takes so much complacency in the company of such, that he can't endure to have them far from him, he must have them always nigh to him, always under his eyes; as for these broken ones, he will to be sure not leave them long, not go far from them, but will be ready at hand to set their bones, to bind up their wounds, to keep them from festering. It may be he may put them to much pain before he brings the Cure to perfection, but it is to prevent future Ache. He is a foolish cruel Chirurgeon, who for fear of putting his Patient to some pain, never searcheth the wound, but skins it over presently: and a wise man will not think him unmerciful that puts him to exquisite pain, so he make a through Cure of it. Thus God doth by his Patients sometimes, when the nature of their Distemper calls for it.

But however, he will be ſure not to be out of the way when they want him moſt. It's poſſible they may look upon themſelves as forgotten by God, they may not know their Phyſitian when he is by them, and they may take their Friend for an Enemy, they may think God far off when he is near; but when their eyes are opened, and their diſtemper is pretty well worn off, they will with ſhame and thankfulneſs acknowledge their Error; nay, they do from their ſouls confeſs that they do not deſerve the leaſt look of Kindneſs from God, but to be counted ſtrangers and enemies; but God will let them know that he loves to act like himſelf; that is, like a God of Love, Mercy, and Goodneſs; and that they are the perſons that he hath ſet his heart upon; he will have them in his Boſome, never leave them nor forſake them; and though theſe contrite ones many times look upon themſelves as loſt, yet God will ſave them, and they ſhall ſing a Song of thankfulneſs amongſt his delivered ones. Again, the Sacrifices of God are a broken heart: *A broken and a contrite Spirit, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe, Pſal.* 51. 17. The proud ſinner he may bring his ſtalled Oxen, multitudes of Rams and Sheep, and his Rivers of Oyl, and yet all this while not be accepted. There is another kind of Sacrifice that would be ten thouſand times more acceptable to God. We read that Sacrifices have been deſpiſed, Prayers, long Prayers have been rejected; Sabbaths, New-Moons, and Solemn Aſſemblies the Lord hath ſometimes abhorred; but we never read that he deſpiſed the Sacrifice of an humble heart, the Prayers of ſuch always have an anſwer one way or other; their poor performances,

mances, their chatterings, and mournings, are sweet melody, and powerful Rhetorick of Gods ear. Who are the men that have most of Gods company? who are they which he doth most frequently visit? Are they not such as look upon themselves as the chiefest of sinners? These are they which are wrapped up into the third Heaven. None have so much of Heaven upon Earth as those that wonder that the Earth doth not swallow them up, and that they are not in Hell. But, O saith the humble Soul, God is the high and mighty God, and infinite in his Holiness and Justice; how then can such a Creature as I ever expect that he should so much as cast his eye upon me? Yes, sweet soul, such is the infinite condescension and goodness of God, that he will sooner look upon thee than another. And if you can't credit my words, hear what he speaks himself, *Isa.* 7. 15. *Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of my contrite ones.* The thoughts of Gods Majesty, Eternity, and Holiness may, and with good reason too, awe that Soul that hath low thoughts of it self. Every sinner hath cause enough to cry out with astonishment, Will God look upon such a vile sinful wretch as I am? Will he that is infinite in holiness take any notice of me, except to shew his displeasure against me? What shall I do? sure such a creature as I can't without a miracle have a smile from God. God may indeed look upon me in his Wrath, and vex me in his sore Displeasure. God may justly look me into Hell; but that he

should

ſhould look upon me in kindneſs, or take any ſpecial notice of me in love, that would be a Wonder indeed. What, God dwell with me! Yes, with thee, if thou haſt but high thoughts of him, and low thoughts of thy ſelf; the meaner thou thinkeſt of thy ſelf, the greater worth he ſees in thee. God will not only look upon thee, nor will he only knock at thy door, and call at your houſe, or give you a tranſitory viſit, but he will come and dwell with thee. Now dwelling ſpeaks a continued abode with one, and thus God will continue with the Humble; never remove from them, for any conſiderable time, till eternity hath an end, till himſelf, and the ſoul ceaſe to be, which will be never. God will not be a ſtranger to humble Souls, but he will come to them, and bring that along with him that ſhall make him, and them welcom too. God never comes to his Friends, but he brings good chear along with him. When the Soul gives God the beſt entertainments, it is all at his coſt, his bread, his fatlings, his wine, his oyl, his cordials, his rich dainties. Where God comes, he will keep a noble houſe, & there ſhall be mirth and rich cheer good ſtore, *Iſa.* 66. 1. 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Heaven is my throne, & Earth is my foot-ſtool: Where is that houſe ye will build me? And where is the place of my reſt? For all theſe things hath my hand made, and all theſe things hath been, ſaith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and tremble at my word.* God ſeems to have low thoughts of Heaven it ſelf in compariſon of an humble ſoul: This is the Pallace, where this great King will keep his Court, this is the place of his reſt. God is not ſo much delighted

lighted and pleaſed in any of his brave Seats, as in this of an Humble Heart; here he dwelleth moſt commonly; this was the great purchaſe of his Son; this was the Maſter-piece of his Power and Goodneſs; this was the Project of infinite wiſdom and counſel. *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* Is a Language that makes Hell in a rage, and Heaven to rejoyce. God is never ſo well pleaſed as when he beholds the beauty of his own Grace ſhining in a poor loſt ſelf-debaſing Creature. The Spouſe is adorned with Humility, when Chriſt gives her that viſit, *Cant.* 1. 4. God hath far more kindneſs for one that lies under a ſenſe of his own Vileneſs, that thinks himſelf unworthy to tread upon Gods Earth, or to breath in his Air, than for the moſt confident righteous Phariſee in the World. Such an humble Soul will be much in admiring of God, and will ſet a high price upon his kindneſs; a look, a ſmile, a viſit! O how welcome are they to thoſe poor trembling Ones! Wherefore God doth with frequency and love viſit them; he knows that he can never be unwelcome to ſuch, they will count it the higheſt honour, that the moſt high ſhould come into them in their low Condition. Wherefore if you deſire to have any intimate acquaintance with God, labour to be more and more ſenſible of your own unworthineſs, ſtudy your heart and nature well, and be more curious in the obſervance of the baſeneſs and treachery of your own Soul; endeavour to have as mean thoughts of your ſelf as *Paul* had, who did not ſtick to call himſelf the chiefeſt of ſinners: Humble your ſelves before the Lord, and he will exalt you; he that is little in his own eye, is greater in

Gods

Gods. When was it that *Jacob* met with God, but when he had been humbling of himself? As you may read at your leisure, *Gen.* 23. There is many a professor that holds out many a year in a course of external performances, and yet never knows what it is to have any intimate acquaintance or converse with God: whereas I am perswaded, if the business were throughly examined, it would be found that they were never made deeply sensible of their undone state out of Christ, never understood the desperate depravedness of their hearts, and nature; that they never lay under any lively sense of their separation from, and enmity against God, and they were never brought off from their own righteousness, and saw themselves poor, beggarly, starved Creatures; and in this condition came to buy Wine and Milk without money, and without price. But this humility, it is an excellent Grace, it makes the soul fit for the richest enjoyments of God, and to do God the greatest service. Were it possible that God should converse much with a proud man, he would make a strange use of it, he would steal God's Crown, and put it upon his own head; but God would not endure proud Angels near him, and can it be expected that he should take proud men in their places? The more any one grows in Grace, and acquaintance with God, the more he sees of his own unworthiness, the more he admires Free Grace. Why, me Lord! why me! will be the Language of those which converse with God: And while they are thus admiring God, and laying themselves low, he comes again with his soul-ravishing kindnesses; and thus by humility they are more acquainted with God,

and

and being more acquainted with God, they are made more humble, and the one increaseth the other. Thus the humble soul is raised higher and higher, till he come to an eternal possession of god in the highest Heavens. When an humble Saint lives as it were in Heaven upon Earth, he scarce thinks himself worthy to live upon the Earth. When any one speaks well of him, and admireth the grace of God in him, he looks upon himself as an unprofitable Servant, and he durst not assume the least glory to himself; not unto mé, not unto me, but unto the Lord be the praise given. Who am I poor wretch? O did you but know what a heart I have, did you but see the workings of my thoughts, could you but tell how things are, indeed you would rather admire at Gods patience, than mans excellency. This he speaks, not that he is worse than others, but because he hath a more spiritual sence of his state than others have: Neither doth he speak thus in proud Policy, thinking to make others to have a better esteem of him for humility, but he doth really feel the pressure of that filthiness of sin, which makes him thus to groan out these complaints. The reason why God doth converse most with the humble, is because they will be most thankful, and most fruitful, and make the wisest improvement of his favours. Wherefore, if you value the comfort of a spiritual life, if you desire communion with God, if you would have a Heaven upon Earth, endeavour to get an humble heart: To walk humbly, and to walk with God, go together.

III. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, you muſt viſit him often, be much at his houſe, knock at his door many times in a day, and reſolve to continue knocking till he open; and if he do not come preſently, wait for him; you would do as much for your Prince, and it may be to a meaner perſon. We can't expect to be acquainted with them that we will not come near. It is to no purpoſe for that man to ſpeak of acquaintance with God, who never ſpeaks to him, comes at him, or enquires after him. Neither will a ſlight viſit or two in a Tranſitory complemental manner ſerve the turn; a man may do this, and yet not be ſaid to be acquainted with God. A ſtranger may come once to your houſe that was never there before, and never intends to come again; and I believe you will ſcarce write ſuch a one down amongſt your ſpecial friends and intimate acquaintance. So in Spirituals; for acquaintance and converſe with God are no ſuch ſlight things as the world commonly take them to be. If you would make any thing of this great work of getting acquaintance with God, you muſt not jeſt in it, you muſt give God many ſolemn and ſet viſits, and carry your ſelf with all the obſervance and reſpect to him that you can for your ſoul. This is that which keeps many thouſands of ſtrangers from the life of Grace, and intimate acquaintance with God, becauſe they know not what thoſe more peculiar viſits of God mean; they underſtand not what it is to draw nigh to God in ſecret; they come not to him with thoſe more ſpiritual acts of Religion; they

pray

pray, it may be, in their Families, and it may be that but ſeldom (but by the way, never let ſuch pretend to the Knowledge of God, who call not upon him in their Families) but what they do, it is but in a poor formal perfunctory manner between ſleep and awake; and will you call this acquaintance with God? will you call this an act of Adoration and ſpiritual Worſhip? Is it to bow down a while before God, and to read or ſpeak a few words, and there's an end? their work is over, their task is done, and they are glad of it. But now ſuch as theſe do not come into Gods Chambers; they come to his Houſe, as I may ſo ſay, but they regard not whether he be at home, whether they ſpeak to God, and have an anſwer from God or no: They call indeed, but deſire not much to be heard; they knock, but are not very careful to ſtay till the door be opened. But alas, alas, ſuch as theſe can't tell what it is to enjoy communion with God. They have got, it may be, into ſome courſe of external performances, by reaſon of the Example of their Superiours, Education, or by being under the ſound of the Goſpel, and from ſome force that natural conſcience doth put upon them, which will not be content except ſomething be done. But ſuch as theſe may not be ſaid to viſit God in that manner that I would perſwade them to, which would be acquainted with God; for all this they ſtand a great way off from God, and may be termed ſtrangers and forreigners. How ſeldom are they upon their knees in ſecret? How rare a thing is it for them with *Iſaac*, to go into the field to meditate? They viſit their Farms, they viſit their Flocks, they viſit their Swine, they go often to

viſit

visit their sottish drunken Companions, whilest God and Christ, their Bible, their Closet, their Hearts are forgotten, and seldom or never visited. And is this true kindness to ones self? Is it any wisdom to slight such a Friend as God would be to us, and to make so much of such sorry Companions? O stupid and dull souls! O what do we mean so strangely to forget our selves! For who is like to get by it, God or we, when we come and feed his Table, and spend upon his cost? O little do people think what they might enjoy, would they purposely set themselves to meet with God, and go to his house with a strong resolution, not to come away from him till they have seen him, or heard from him. Now the great duties in which the soul may be said to visit God in, and in which God do many times give out much of himself to to the soul, are these:

1. Solemn Meditation.
2. Secret Prayer.
3. Fasting.
4. Community of Experiences, and Communion with the Saints.
5. The Lords Supper.

1. *Meditation*. When the Soul doth fix it self upon the Thoughts of some Spiritual and Divine object, such as the love of God in Christ, the glory of another world, *&c*. This is, as it were going out to meet the Lord, and to take a walke with our Beloved; this is the getting up to Mount *Pisgah*, to take a survey of that goodly Land. When the soul doth as it were, bathe it self in the Contemplation of Christs beauty, and labours to enamour it self more and more with his love; and to throw it self, as I am so say, into that

that Ocean of Divine goodneſs; it will ſcarce leave till it be wound up to the higheſt pitch of admiration, of that infinite boundleſs love which ſhould do ſuch glorious things for ſo vile and contemptible, for ſo rebellious and unthankful a wretch as that is. O what manner of love is this! O that I were ſick of love! O that I might die ſick of love! O that I were once in the embraces of my deareſt Lord and Husband! O that I could do nothing elſe day and night, but praiſe, love, and admire this infinite boundleſs love? And did Chriſt indeed offer up his life for my ſin? Did he not think his precious heart-blood too dear for me? And ſhall I think my heart-love too dear for him? What, for me, Lord, which am the chiefeſt of ſinners! Here, here's kindneſs with a witneſs. Stand ſtill, O my ſoul, and admire, ſtand looking upon this lovely ſight till thou art all on fire. Theſe are pure flames, here thou needeſt not to fear to exceed; widen thy ſoul, let thy affections run without controle. More fire ſtill, blow hard, it doth yet but ſmoke: O for ſome coals from the altar! O for more fire, more fuel! O that my heart were vehemently inflamed in the ſtrongeſt love to him, who ſtill deſerves a thouſand times more! Help me all ye Angels, to bleſs and adore his marvellous loving kindneſs. Chriſt is a friend to Publicans and Sinners indeed, or ſuch a one as I had never been on this ſide of Hell. O love, love, love! What ſhall I render unto the Lord? O that men would bleſs the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! O what meaneſt thou, O my ſoul, that thou art yet ſo cold? Awake, awake Pſaltery and Harp, I my ſelf will

awake and praiſe, admire and love thee, O my God, whoſe love to my ſoul is beyond expreſſion. And thus while the ſoul is muſing, the Fire begins to burn; while the Spouſe is thinking of her glorious Husband, he knocks at the door, ſhe draws the Latch, and he comes in ſmelling of Mirrhe, Aloes, and Caſſia; he comes and kiſſes the ſoul with the kiſſes of his lips, his love is better than wine, he comes and takes the ſoul into his arms. O the ſweet pleaſure of Divine Love, infinitely tranſcending all carnal Affections! O the joy that is at this meeting, far ſurpaſſing humane apprehenſion! O the ſweet entertainment that God and the Soul gives each other at ſuch a time! I appeal to the experience of thoſe that have been much exerciſed in this great Duty of *Meditation*, if they have been in good earneſt in the work, I am confident they can ſay ſomething to this point. What ſayeſt thou, O Chriſtian, which art uſed to imitate *Iſaac*? didſt thou never meet with another-gueſs Companion than *Rebeccah*? As he met with a Wife, ſo thou haſt met with thy Husband? When thou haſt been in the Field, or Cloſet, at this work, hath not Chriſt then taken you by the hand, and led you into his Garden, and made you to taſte of his pleaſant Fruits? hath he not brought you into his Banqueting-houſe, and brought out ſome of his choiceſt dainties? are not thoſe Flaggons more full of Spirit, more Cordial, and refreſhing than Wine? O little do any but thoſe who have tried it, think what a life they might lead, if they would with ſeriouſneſs engage in this duty? Speak O ye gracious ones, that make conſcience of this Soul-raviſhing duty; ſpeak I beſeech you, and

do

do not ſmother the kindneſſes of God to you; ſpeak, and let him have the praiſe: It may be by your venturing your experience, hundreds may be encouraged to ſet upon the ſame work, and hundreds may alſo have the ſame experiences. What do you ſay? have you not found the benefit of this duty? did you never find *Meditation* a ſweet work? was it worth your while or no to ſequeſter your ſelves a while from the world to talk with your Beloved? did you ever repent you of your Labour, and think your time loſt? and have you not been able to ſay that at ſuch and ſuch a time, when you were in the Mount, that it was good being there? could you not have been almoſt content to have left the deareſt Relations, and to have quitted your intereſt in all Creature-comforts, ſo you might have had fuller enjoyments of God? could you not have been contented to paſs from Contemplation to Viſion and Fruition? why, ſpeak then for the Lords ſake and for the ſake of precious ſouls, and keep not ſuch a thing as this is in; let your unexperienced Neighbours know what a Soul-raviſhing, and Soul-raiſing Duty *Meditation* is. Let me ask thee which readeſt theſe Lines, did you ever try what there was in this Duty of *Meditation*? ſuppoſe, if you converſe much with ſuch Books as ſpeak of Communion with God, you can't but deſire ſomething of it, and I am perſwaded you have ſometimes wept ſince you began to read this Book, to think how little you experience; I believe you would be glad with all your Soul, to know what it is to be acquainted with God, and to have ſuch a Friend as I have been ſpeaking of. Why let me ask you again, did you ever try

what *Meditation* is?(You may read much of the excellency of this Duty, and directions about it in Mr. *Baxters Saints Everlasting Rest*) did you ever get out of the world, and intensely fix your heart and thoughts upon any of the glorious Attributes of God? Did you ever set before your eyes his love in Christ? If not, O try and fall to this work seriously and speedily, and you shall soon find the sweetness of it; you will soon say that you lost many a good meeting, many a dainty bit for want of going for it. A carnal worldly heart I must confess may possibly spoil this Duty, as all others, and grow formal in it, and be weary of it, and cast it off (though, let me put in this, I believe its marvellous rare for a Hypocrite to have any thing to do in such a secret duty as this is) but if they were true to the interest of their own souls in the management of this work, I am confident they would be every day more and more in love with this duty: For I am perswaded that when the soul is in good earnest, nay, I can speak it positively, there is no duty doth so much raise and warm the soul; there is no duty wherein the people of God enjoy his sweet company more than in this. This opens the treasures of Gods kindness; this takes his Love-tokens and presents them to the view of the soul: this unlocks the Cabinets, and fetches out those precious Jewels; by this the soul doth, as it were talk with its Beloved; and in this Christ doth as it were, take the soul by the hand, and lead it into his Palace, and shews it all those glorious things, which it shall shortly have in her possession for ever. And how can this choose but engage the soul to express its gratitude to the height

height in answer to such love; and when the soul is in this frame, Christ will not be behind-hand with her, no love shall be lost between them: If the Spouse walk out to look for her Beloved, she shall find him before she hath done.

2. Another duty by which the Soul doth visit God in a special manner, is *Secret Prayer*; by this the Soul knocks, and God is quick of hearing, and none of his Friends shall wait without doors so long as to catch cold. By this the Soul doth as it were storm Heaven, by this it gets into the presence-Chamber, and presents its requests. In this duty a Christian doth as it were return the Key of Heavens Doors, and by this he unlocks the door of his own Soul; and so there is free access on both sides, the Soul visits God, and God visits the Soul, and this creats an intimacy. The poor wounded Creature opens his wounds, and then the great Physician comes with the Balm of *Gilead*. When *Jacob* is thus weeping and praying alone, he meets with God, he meets a blessing, he wrestles, he conquers. This duty of *Secret Prayer*, and that other of *Meditation*, are two fatning duties, by which the Souls of Believers come to Gods Table, and eat, and drink of strengthening food; and for want of these, many poor souls are thin. O why do Christians, why do Professors maintain no fairer correspondency with God in such duties wherein he doth manifest himself more than ordinary to the Soul? The reason of this may be because God accounts himself more highly honoured, and more truly loved by them which are much in these, than by others. By this a man doth as it were honour the goodness of God, in that it shews it worth the while to steal

out of the world, and to leave the best company on Earth to go to God: He honours the Truth of God, by being earnest for what God hath promised though it be unseen; he honours the Omniscience of God, by contenting himself with his eye and his ear alone; he sanctifies his Omnipresence, by believing that his God can hear him and be with him in what corners oever he creeps into. I might be large in speaking of the excellencies of this duty, but I refer it rather to another place. But I would not be mistaken in what I have delivered, as if I would by this exclude Family-prayer, no, far be it from me; for God in these doth many times exceedingly refresh his. But because a man can't possibly judge so well of himself by publick prayer, as he can by secret: And hypocrisie & pride, do not usually so much attend secret duty, as more publick. Its possible in more publick duty, that a man may be much raised, and be very warm, and high in his expressions, and almost ravish the hearts of his Hearers, whereas he may be all that while acted only by a proud heart, and for all that I know, the Devil himself may help a man thus to pray sometimes. This I am confident of he is not afraid of such prayers as these which tend so much to the hardening of a sinner, and makes him believe that his heart is warmed with communion with God, when as it is possible it is nothing but a secret self-pleasing, that those that joyned with him, might think very highly of him, as one that was passing Spiritual in his performances. O the heart of man is deep, and desperately full of deceit! But now, there is none of this Temptation in secret Closet-prayer, and there a Soul may be more particular in its com-

plaints

plaints and petitions, more earnest in pleading with God, and may use such expostulations, postures, and gestures, such Intermissions, & groanings, such pauses as would be very unfit for more publick duty. Wherefore I lay somewhat the more stress upon this duty of *Secret Prayer*. But this I say again, where one of them is practised conscientiously, the other will not be neglected. I might add the practice & experience of Gods children to inforce this duty. *David* would never have been at it so oft, at midnight, if he had got nothing at all by it, *Peter* would scarce have forgot to eat, when he was an hungry, except he had met with a bit in a Corner to stay his stomach.

3. *Fasting*, especially private *Fasting*, is another duty, wherein God meets the Soul, and the Soul visits God. This is as it were execution-day, the day when the Soul brings out all the Enemies of God to be crucified; this is the day wherein the Idols are searched for, brought out, and buryed, or ground to powder, and these are things which God will come to see with much delight. By this the Soul is as it were adorned, her deformities done away, and she is trimmed up to meet her Beloved. When a Saint fasts from sin, and abstains from sensual pleasures, then it is many times feasted by God, and refreshed with Spiritual enjoyments.

4. Another season wherein God meets the soul and the Soul is visited by God, is, when Christians are met together to communicate experiences, or to discourse together about the great things of God. What though most of the world are asham'd to own Religion when it is out of fa-

shion? What though but few dare meet together to speak of Gods goodness, and to praise him, and call upon his Name? Why, Christ says, Though there be but two or three of them, he will make the number one the more, *he will be in the midst of them*: And though they dare but whisper, it may be, and their meetings to observe God, & do good to one to another, may be prohibited by the publick Magistrate; and consequently what they do in this kind, must be done in a great deal of hazard, yet the people of God stand not long disputing, they know what to do in this case; yet they would be wise in it too? Not to dare the Magistrate, and to do what they do to confront authority, but in the uprightness of their souls they desire to meet together to worship God according to his own will. Yet for all this, though they manage their business with never so much secresie, God will take notice of them, he hearkens and hears, and a book of remembrance is written for them that call oft upon his name, & God will make them up among his Jewels. But I shall have occasion to speak of something to this purpose afterwards, and therefore I pass it over the more briefly.

5. Another time wherein the Lord is pleased to discover much intimacy, and indeared affection to his people, is in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. This is the great passeover, and it can't be unwelcome News to the poor *Israelites*, to hear of a Redemption from Wars, then Egyptian bondage, instead of being burdened with barbarous Task-masters, to be made free, rich, and honourable, and to see the strength of the enemy laid in the dust. It is not for nothing

that

that this Paſſeover is to be had in everlaſting remembrance. If I ſhould appeal to the people of God that have kept this ſolemn Feaſt, and ask them how their hearts were affected, do they not all bow their Heads and Hearts, and adore that Goodneſs that ſhould Save, Feed, and Feaſt them, and Puniſh, Kill, and Damn others. Are there not thouſands that can tell you, that Chriſts Fleſh is Bread indeed, and his Blood Drink indeed; no Proviſion ſo great, no Banquet ſo ſweet, ſo noble: no Entertainment comparable to that which the Princely Jeſus giveth to his Spouſe in that Ordinance: The King brings her into the Banqueting-Houſe, and his Banner over her is Love; ſhe is then made to underſtand, that the Kiſſes of his Lips do breath Life, and that his Viſits at ſuch a time, uſually leave behind them more ſpecial teſtimonies of the largeneſs of his Heart, the lovelineſs of his Nature, and of his matchleſs Excellency. Speak Chriſtian, what doſt thou ſay to this? Canſt thou not ſubſcribe to this? Art thou not able to ſay, that then thou haſt taſted and ſeen, couldſt thou not then go out and invite all the poor ſtarved hungry ſouls in the world, to come and ſee, and taſte? Art thou not able to ſay, come, and I will tell you what Chriſt hath done for my ſoul. Let me ask that Saint that hath been feaſted many a time, and oft, what he thought of his Entertainment: Were you not made welcome? Was not the joy of the Lord your ſtrength? Was not the Proviſion that the world entertains her friends with, but mean, courſe, unſavory, compared with it? Which was beſt, the Huſks, or the Bread, and fatted Calf, the Garlick and Onions, or the Manna,

Manna, the Milk and Hony? 'Tis not without cause that the Faces of some do shine, their looks speak their Fare none of the meanest, and their Activity is not a disparagement to their Keeper: inquire further, and you shall be informed if their experience be not too big for to be clothed in words. How oft have some of Christs favourites, after they have Dined with their Lord been led forth into the Garden to walk; and oh the delightful shades that they have sat under! At another time, Christ, not Satan, hath carried them as it were in his Arms, and Bosome, and set them upon the Pinacle of the Temple, not to make them giddy, and hazard their fall, but to let them understand how much he hath preferred them before others, and as long as they are upon that great Corner-Stone, no Storms can shake, in Christs Arms no fear of falling: At another time, the Soul hath been carried into the Mount of God, and there it hath seen Christ Transfigured, and beheld so much Brightness, Glory, and Majesty in him, that hath reflected a Glory upon it self, and even Transfigured the Soul, that its fearce like it self, and there it could say, its good being here, and then, Christ hath bid the Soul lift up its Eyes and look up to the Heavens, look round from one side to the other, and look beyond the visible Heavens by Faith, to the Seat of the Blessed; well, all this is thine, to thee will I give it, I purchased it, I have paid for it, and 'tis thine, and live like one that is worth more than a world, live up to your Estate, expect that shortly I should set you in the Possession of all. And as for the World, look down upon that if it be worth the accepting, so much

much of it as is good for thee thou shalt have also. O did weak Christians but know what strength, joy, and comfort this Ordinance doth afford, I believe they would not be so hardly perswaded to come when they are invited! Did they but understand how sweet, how wholsome, how dainty the Dishes are which Wisdom prepares; could they but conceive what saitsfaction, and fulness there is for the empty; what joy, and solace for the Mourning, and Disconsolate, what strength and quickning for the Weak, I am ready to think that they would scarce be so long absent from the Lords Table: but think not that every one that sits down is made so welcome, nor that Christ gives his dainties to strangers, or enemies; many may come and receive, and not only feed upon a piece of Bread and Drink, two or three spoonfuls of Wine, and really, if this were all the Provision that a Saint were to have, it were scarce worth so solemn an Invitation: It's possible to come thither to eat and drink your own Damnation, and instead of an affectionate Treatment to be dismissed with a Friend, how comest thou hither, not having on the Wedding Garment. Yet the sensible Hungry burthened Souls, notwithstanding all their fears may come, nay they must, and its little less than giving assent to Satans caumnies which he raiseth against Christ and his wayes to forbear; its too ungrateful a Contempt of one of the excellent Cordials which the great Physitian hath provided for the recovering, and strengthning of his poor swooning Patients; and in a word, its too like a foolish being fond of our Sin and Sorrow, when we refuse the com-

fortable Appointment; which the Goodneſs and and Wiſdom of a Father, the Love, and Tenderneſs of a Husband, and the Sweetneſs of the Holy Spirit, doth ſo freely offer, perſwade, command: the Spirit ſaith, come, and the Bridegroom ſaith come, and why ſhould not he that is a thirſt come thankfully, humbly, ſpeedily. Well now, poor weary Soul, what haſt thou to ſay againſt the excellency of reſt? Poor ſick Soul, what Fault canſt thou find with Eaſe, Health, and Strength? Poor guilty Soul, that looks upon thy ſelf as next to condemned: What harm would a Pardon, and the publique ſealing of it do thee? Who would think that man hungry, that had rather eat Aſhes than Bread? who would judge that perſon thirſty, that had rather drink Gall, Tears, and Wormwood, than the clear refreſhing Streams that come from that Rock the Lord Chriſt? Will you, never believe that Chriſt invites you, look into the Note that he hath ſent out his ſervants with, whoſe Name do I read there? Who are the perſons that are invited? of what Rank and Quality? Are they the Great ones of the World? Are they the Learned? Are they the Proud, and Self-conceited Phariſees? Why, I find none of theſe in the Writing; Who are they then that may come with Confidence to draw water out of theſe Wells of Conſolation? The Poor in Spirit the Hungry, the Sick, the Wounded, the Loſt; theſe are Pools of *Bethesda*, where the Angels of the Covenant do oft deſcend, and move the Waters; and where is it fitter for the impotent to lye, than there where they cannot miſs of a Doctor, a viſit, or Cure. What do you think of

this

this poor Heart; are they but flouriſhes, do I ſpeak, or doth Chriſt, and if he ſay it, who can diſſannul it? will he, can he be worſe than his word; I know he is uſually better, but never ſhort of his Promiſe; will you Credit the Experiences of Chriſtians, have they not ſeen, have they not known, have they not felt; yea, have not all your Spiritual ſences been, exerciſed, and refreſhed at that time when the King hath been at his Table? One is ready to ſay, if ever I could have left the World at a minutes warning, and have ſtept immediately into Eternity, it was then when mine eyes beheld the King in his beauty, when he held out his Golden Scepter unto me, and took me into his Imbraces. Yea, when the Miniſters of Chriſt preſented me with the Jewels and Bracelets, and ask't me whither I would go with them to Chriſt; my Soul made a ſpeedy and thankful reply, my Heart and Love is his, and his will I be for ever. O that I were once ſafe in his Armes! O that I might live with him, and never part! O when ſhall it be! *Come Lord Jeſus, come quickly.* I remember I have heard it reported of that Reverend, and Holy man of God Maſter *Allen* (who lived at as high a rate as moſt on this ſide Perfection and Glory) that he was before he died in very rare ſeraphique raptures of Joy and Love, ſo that he could not chuſe but burſt out into unuſual Expreſſions of Praiſe, ſuch as theſe: Ten thouſand praiſes to the King of Saints for the freeneſs, and riches of his Grace to any poor Soul; let every corner of Heaven ring with *Hallelujahs*; let all the Angels help me to praiſe thy incomparable, lovely, and glorious Jeſus. O the Joys that he feaſts my Soul with

who!

who would not be Christs Servant! never did I feel such transcendent, pure Divine Joys, except at the Lords Table; and then indeed I have been oft so raised in Spirit, that my Nature, except sustained by a Miracle, could scarce bear a greater weight of Comfort. O the unspeakable vast satisfying Pleasures that Christ in that Ordinance doth afford some of his sometimes! I have heard another dear Brother say, that for some years together, he scarce ever failed of some notable Token of Love at that great Ordinance. But I would not, instead of comforting, and incouraging the poor Saint, bring him into greater fears and despondings: Judge not therefore that this is the portion of all Gods Children, nor of any at all times to have such large Discoveries as these. Heaven is reserved for Heaven; some have a single Messe, some a double, some five times more than their Brethen; let all be thankful if the great *Joseph* instead of a Prison, give a Feast, and in it make himself known to us to be our brother; let's love him, admire his condescention, and be ready to wonder that he doth so much for us, rather than repine that he doth more for others. If thou hast some drawings, and longings, and mournings after Christ, and a deep sence of thy hardness, unbelief, and worldliness, be thankful; it may be this is more wholsome entertainment, and fitter for the present Temper and Constitution of thy Soul than those Flagons of Wine, perhaps they would fly up into thy head, and make thee giddy, proud, and wanton; if thou be but well wrought, poor, and hungry, thou wilt be thankful for a little; and a Crumb that falls from the Table to an humble

Soul

Soul, is better entertainment than it knows it deserves, or could without a Miracle of Kindness have expected; mistake me not as if I would have Christians sit down satisfied with little or no comfort at that Ordinance; no, 'tis quite another designe that I am carrying on; 'tis only a hint to quell Ingratitude, my great work at present is, to quicken diligence in Preparation, and to raise the Saints Valuation of that Ordinance, and his Expectations from Christ in it. I say again, Christ usually proportions his entertainment to the diligent, faithful, humble preparations of the Soul to meet him; they that trim their Lamps, and have Oyl in them, are most like to meet that Bridegroom with Joy; he that hath on the Wedding Garment, can't miss of a Welcom, and the good and faithful Servant is most likely to have the Masters commendation, and to enter into his Joy. But more or less, every sincere Soul at one time or another, will meet with Refreshment at that Supper, and amongst all the rare Dishes that are served up, no question but some will be suitable (if not all) to a hungry, Spiritual Stomach. I can scarce leave this sweet Subject, the time draws nigh, and the Servants are sent out to invite, and thou, O my Soul, art one of the Guests that art bidden. Hark, methinks I hear a Royal Proclamation, *Whosoever is a thirst, let him come and drink of the Waters of Life freely*: Methinks the silver-Trumpet of the Gospel, and Divine Love sounds a Jubilee: Methinks the Air ecchoes with a strange Harmony, somewhat like that, *Luke* 2. 14. *Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth Peace, Goodwill towards men.* Don't the very Heavens ring with these Blessed Words, *A*

Saviour

Saviour! a Saviour! a mighty Redeemer! a Pardon! a Pardon? Liberty! Liberty! a glorious Liberty! and again the Congregations of the Saints, and Redeemed ones cry, *Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.* I had thought to have done, but the Feast is so sweet I must fall on again: Heres, no Surfeiting, the more I feed, the more hungry, and yet the more satisfied, the more delighted: Here's nothing but Fulness, Sweetness, and Love may be written upon every Dish; and Royal noble everlasting Bounty, may be proclaimed before every Course: All the dismal Bonds are thrown in Cancelled; all our Debts forgiven and paid, the great Surety shews, the Acquaintance long since granted in the Court of Heaven, now its given in to the Court of Conscience. The bloody War is concluded by a happy and firm Peace: God is no longer a Judge, an Enemy, but now the Soul hears such words, Friend, Father, Husband. The Challenges of Law, Conscience, and Sathan, are now silenced, the Inditements against the Soul are all quashed, the Soul may walk now at liberty, and fear no Arrest; who can lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect? its Christ that justifies, who can condemn, Christ saith it, swears it, seals it, it cannot but be true, why art thou then cast down poor Soul, and why art thou disquieted? Christ hath made a blessed exchange with thee, he hath drank the bitter Cup, and offers thee the sweet, which is spiced with Grace and Love; Christ hath purchased the Crown for thee, and taken the Cross to himself, he took the Rags, and gives thee the Robes, he became Poor, that thou mayst become Rich, he emptied him-

himself that thou mayest be filled; he was esteemed as nothing, that thou mightest from worse than nothing possess all things; and what now remains, but that with the greatest Gratitude, you accept of Christ's offer whensoever he invites thee to his Table? what doth better become thee than the deepest resentment of the highest kindness, and a grateful closure with all the overtures of Divine Goodness? O happy are the people that are admitted to this Intimacy! happy are the Souls that know the worth, the use of this Ordinance, and make it their business wisely to improve it. O what an opportunity have such of Christ here! what Request may they not then have granted! and when Christ is giving, what will he, what can he deny them which have his heart already? I have been the more large in this, because it was the particular request of one of my Brethren a Reverend Minister, that in the next Edition, I would not forget that Ordinance in which God usually doth most signally discover his Love to his people.

IIII. DIRECTION

If you would get acquainted with God, get Christ along with you, when you go to God. You are like to speed no way so soon as this way; nay, let me say, all that I have said before signifies nothing at all without this. There is no Name under Heaven, by which we can saved, but by the Name of Christ; and whosoever comes to the Father by him, he will in no wise cast out. God can't deny his own Son any thing,

he can never forget that great undertaking of his, by which he glorified his Fathers infinite Justice, and infinite Love, and did him more honour than all the Saints and Angels in the world. His Son, the Lord Christ, hath such an interest in his Father, that he can as soon despise his own Honour, as to refuse any Request that is presented to him, by his Son. If Christ come to him, and say, Father, here is a poor sinner that I have undertaken for, and that flew to me for refuge, Look upon him for my sake; why the Fathers Arms are presently open; he will not reject his Sons Petitions. The truth of it is, this is the greatest cause of the miscarriage of poor Creatures, that go about to do that themselves, and by themselves, which they can never do alone. They go to God all alone, and no Wonder then they meet with a Frown; for there is no Name under Heaven, by which a man can be saved, but by the Name of Christ, and out of Christ: God is a consuming fire; & there is but one *Mediator*, the Man Christ Jesus. And there is but one Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. That which *Joseph* said of *Benjamin*, God saith of Christ, except you bring *Benjamin* along with you, you shall not see my Face; except you bring Christ along with you, you shall not see my Face. There is a notable Story which is commonly by Divines applied to our present purpose, and that not without good reason; it is concerning a Law among the *Molossians*, where whosoever came to the King with his Son in his Arms, should be accepted into favour, let his Fault be what it will. So let a Man be what he will before, yet if he come to God in Christ, he can't be thrust away.

O therefore, if thou wouldeſt have any countenance from God, beg for a Chriſt to bear thee company into the preſence of God. I will tell you this for your comfort, Chriſt hath a loving deſign in his heart to do ſuch offices of kindneſs for poor Malefactors that underſtand ſomething of their danger. If you ſee your ſelf loſt for want of reconciliation with God, Chriſt he ſtands ready to lead you into his Fathers houſe. O did you but know how willing he is to bring undone loſt Penitents to God, it would make your heart leap within you for joy. Behold, how oft he asks after you; what doth that ſinner mean to ruine himſelf? I would with all my heart bring him out of all thoſe perplexities, and undertake to make God and him Friends, if he would be but ruled by me; and upon this account he ſends up and down many hundreds of his Miniſters to tell ſinners as much, that they may not be undone everlaſtingly. Doth not Wiſdom call? doth not Chriſt plead the Caſe, and expoſtulate with ſinners? and who would not, that hath any underſtanding at all of his ſtate out of Chriſt, with all poſſible thankfulneſs be encouraged to accept of his kindneſs? Chriſt hath done as much as this comes to already for many Millions, and his Father never ſaid to him, Son, why do you trouble your ſelf and me with ſo many of theſe wretched Creatures, let them alone to take their courſe. Where did God ever expreſs himſelf in this manner? did he ever take it unkindly that his Son ſhould every day bring ſuch Gueſts to his houſe, and be continually begging one Boon or other for them, or putting up ſome Petitions upon their account, or pleading with his Father for

them when they do offend. Is God diſpleaſed at ſuch work as this? is he not as willing to receive ſuch, as his Son is to bring them? and both Father and Son more willing to ſave the ſinner than he is to be ſaved? O kindneſs; Chriſt loves the ſinner better than he loves himſelf! and as I ſaid before, ſo I ſay again, the Father doth not grutch any thing that Chriſt gives, or doth for poor ſinners. The Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, it is that Wedding Garment, in which we may ſit at the Kings Table, and are welcome; theſe are the Robes of our elder Brother, in which we can't miſs of our Fathers Bleſſing. O how many poor Creatures have walked in the dark many years, becauſe they have not been brought off from themſelves, but have ſought that by themſelves, which is to be ſought only by Chriſt; becauſe they have looked for that in the Law, which is to be found only in the Goſpel; and no wonder their buſineſs went on ſo ſlowly, when they went the quite contrary way to work. When any comes to God without Chriſt, they come like *Simon Magus*, with their own money in their hand to buy a great Commodity, which is not to be purchaſed with ſuch kind of Coyn. If you come to God through Chriſt, you may come with boldneſs to the Throne of Grace; but if you come without him, you do but come with Madneſs upon the point of the flaming ſword.

V. DI-

V. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, come much where he is wont to be, frequent his houſe, lye always at the Doors of Wiſdom, engage much in his Ordinances. This was that courſe that *David* took when he wanted Gods company, away he goes to the houſe of God; and, O what earneſtneſs doth he uſe when the doors of the Lords Tabernacle were ſhut, to get them open again? what moan doth he make when he was for ſome time ſequeſtred by his enemies, from the enjoyment of God in his publick Ordinances? *As the Hart pants after the water-broks, ſo did his ſoul pant after God, the living God.* O when ſhould he appear before him? when ſhould he again behold the out goings of God in his Sanctuary, as ſometimes he had? *How amiable are thy tabernacles*, ſaith he, *O Lord God of Hoſts! And one thing have I deſired, and that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in thy houſe, and ſee thee, and enquire in thy tabernacle, Pſal.* 42. *Pſal.* 48. *Pſal.* 27. 4. He thought God was like to be found no where ſo ſoon as at his own houſe; he was ſure he was never from home. *David* can never forget what uſage, and entertainment he was wont to have there, and that this great Friend was uſed to have a ſtanding Table, an open Houſe, and that when his Gueſts were ſet, he would come and bid them welcome; eat O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. See therefore that you get into that part of Gods houſe where he doth moſt frequently come, get under the moſt powerful Miniſtery; O hear the Word with all the Reverence, Attention,

and affection that you can for your ſoul; miſs not any opportunities that God puts into your hand, leſt that ſhould be the time in which you might have met with God; Lye at the pool of *Bethesda*, and wait for the moving of the Waters; ſet your ſelves as in the houſe of God, and remember though you ſee not God, that he is always preſent in all places, but he is there more eſpecially preſent where his people meet together to attend upon him in his own Ordinances? Wherefore when you come to hear the Word, ſet your ſelf as in the preſence of God, and hear as for your life and ſoul, *Deut.* 32. 46. *Set your hearts to all the words that you ſhall hear; for it is not a vain thing, it is your life*, Iſa. 55. 2, 3. *Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your ſoul delight it ſelf in fatneſs. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your ſoul ſhall live; and I will make an everlaſting Covenant with you, even the ſure mercies of David.* He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the mighty *Jehovah* is ſpeaking to his ſoul. Wherefore I ſay it again, ſet your ſelf as in the very immediate preſence of God; and when you hear a word that you are very nearly concerned in, put up ſuch a ſhort Ejaculation as this. Now Lord, ſtrike this hard heart of mine; now Lord come in I beſeech thee; O that this word might be the key which might open my heart for the King of Glory to come in? O command thy loving kindneſs this day to break into my ſoul? O that this might be the day in which Salvation might come unto my houſe? O that this might be the man that might be my Spirituale Father, that this might be the Meſſenger one among a thouſand, that may bring me good tidings? O

that

that this might be the sentence, that this might be the hour of Love? O that this might be the day that I may have in everlasting remembrance? O that I might presently without any more delay, set out for *Canaan*? Cry out with as much earnestness as that poor man did, who brought his possessed child before Christ; O Lord I have brought my unbeliving heart before thee to cure, it exposes me a thousand times to unspeakable hazards; but Lord, if thou wilt but speak the word, it shall be dispossessed: I would believe, Lord help my unbelief. I have brought my hard heart before thee, Lord soften it, and let me not go from time to time with these dreadful diseases hanging about me, to infect, and undo my self and others. O melt me, O Lord, melt me, and let me have such a look from thee, as *Peter* once had, which made him to go out and weep bitterly. But I shall speak a little more of this nature under another Direction.

VI. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, you must get acquainted with some of his Friends, and they will do all they can, and be glad of it too, to help you to be acquainted with him they will not spare to give you their utmost assistance in this great business. And when they shall hear you asking, what you shall do to know God, they are glad at their Heart, and will not be at quiet till they have got thee home with them to their Fathers House; they watch for your Soul, and no greater Joy than to help forward such a work as this, then to be imployed any way in the

ſervice of your Souls. They are glad when they hear any ſaying, let us go to the houſe of the Lord, and asking the way to *Zion*, with their faces thither-ward. O! Chriſtians ſociety, good company is of exceeding uſe; one good ſervant in a houſe, the whole Family may fare the better for him. *Laban* and *Potiphar*, though ignorant enough in Spirituals, could not but obſerve this, that the Lord bleſſed their Families, for the ſake of one godly Servant. *I* do not ſpeak this only with reſpect to Temporals, becauſe of that Diligence and Faithfulneſs in their places, that Religion will put them upon; but with reſpect to Spirituals, they will be dropping ſomething that may tend to the awakening, and convincing of their ſleepy, unbelieving, ignorant companions; they have an inward principle which puts them upon communicating what Grace they have received; they know the more they impart to others, the more they ſhall have themſelves; they have a Compaſſion for Souls, and would fain have as many as they can along with them to Heaven; they will be teaching little Children to Pray, and Inſtilling ſomething that the very Babes may ſet forth Gods Praiſes, and they will be pleading with God for them. But this only by the by. Now if thoſe that are gracious, endeavour what they can to bring in thoſe that are open enemies; how much more will they be ready to give all the help they can to you that earneſtly deſire it? Now when any one comes to this paſs, that he ſees a difference between the godly and the wicked, and to ſay that the righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour, and to have an earneſt deſire to aſſociate themſelves with them, it

is a very great ſign that God hath an intention to do ſuch a Soul good. Wherefore if you would be brought to the knowledge of God, go ſpeedily to them that know him well; and they will tell you great things of him, and how they came firſt acquainted with him, and how this acquaintance hath been kept; they will tell you where they firſt met him, they will give you to underſtand, that at ſuch and ſuch a time, when they little thought of God, they were ſtrangely brought acquainted with him. When they came (out of Faſhion, or curioſity, or to laugh at him that taught them, or it may be to pick ſome Quarrel with him) to hear ſuch a man; they were made to ſee what they never took any great notice of before, that they were in an undone condition by Nature, and that except Chriſt would pitty them, there was no remedy, but to Hell they muſt go; whereas before they thought themſelves as ſafe as could be: But then they ſaw that it was no light matter to be out of Chriſt, and Aliens from the Common-wealth of *Iſrael*. After this, they were made to underſtand ſomething of Chriſts undertaking for poor loſt ſinners, and they heard of his exceeding willingneſs to receive the chiefeſt of ſinners, and that then they began to ſee an excellency in his love, and goodneſs, and to be ſomewhat more taken with the kindneſs of Chriſt than ever they were before, and they felt ſome longings after the precious Jeſus. O that they had but a Chriſt for their Souls? and that after this they were by the Spirit of God, in ſome meaſure enabled to caſt themſelves at the feet of Chriſt for mercy, and that upon his own terms, knowing that if mercy

came

came not that way to them, they must sink for ever; and that upon this act of recumbency after they had for some time waited upon God in the way of his ordinances, they began to taste and relish the things of God, and at last they met him whom their Souls loved. Inquire of them, I say, and they will talk thus to you, and tell you also, that there was a time wherein they were foolish, disobedient, and unto every good Work Reprobate, and miserably neglectful of their Souls, that they did not at all mind their Eternal welfare, but made light of Christ, made a mock of sin, and made nothing of Eternal Damnation. And they will direct, and encourage you also. Let me tell you, they have an interest in God, and their prayers for you may be more advantagious than you are aware of. Yet I would not that you should make Christs of the Saints, nor forget what is the work of the Mediator alone. Saints are to be valued, but Christ is to be valued infinitely more. Get acquainted with some warm rare experienced Christian, and make him your bosom Friend, and observe him, and you shall see much of the beauty of Religion shining in him, and you shall see how chearfully, and comfortably he walks; now ask him what his practice is, and go you, and do likewise, have a care of harbouring ill-thoughts of the people God, or for the sake of one Hypocrite of censuring a thousand sincere Ones. Judg you whether this be just and equal doing? How would you like it, if one that bears some Relation to you should do some vile abominable thing, and bring himself to an untimely end, and people should say all the whole Family is like him? though it

may

may be you are grieved to the very heart, that ſuch a thing ſhould be done by any in the world, much more by any that bears any kind of Relation to your ſelf. I tell you, as contemptibly as the world ſpeak of the godly, they are not ſuch odious Creatures as they are preſented to be. The Saints they are not Troublers, but Peace-makers, they love to make peace between man and man, and what in them lies alſo between God and man: Your converſe with ſuch as fear the Lord, will make you like them, at leaſt they will endeavour as much. (*Ar. Epict.* l. 3 c. 16.) He ſpoke no untruth, who ſaid, *That company is of an aſſimulating Nature. A living coal laid to a heap of dead ones may kindle them all; but they are more like, except it be blown up, to put the live one quite out*; therefore ſaith the ſame Author, *You muſt be very cautious of your company.* It is ſtored of *Socrates*, that he had a rare Art of making his familiar Friends of his mind. Some active Chriſtians take as much pains to make their familiars of Chriſts mind, *Prov.* 13 20. *He that walketh with the wiſe, ſhall yet be wiſer, but a company of Fools ſhall be deſtroyed*, Prov. 10 10, 21. 33. *The tongue of the juſt is as choiſe Silver, but the heart of the wicked is little worth. The lips of the Righteous feed many, but fools dy for want of wiſdom The lips of the Righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked ſpeaketh froward things.* Such as theſe will do what they can to make you out of love with ſin, and in love with God. Such as theſe will from their own experience be ſetting forth the goodneſs of God, and tell you that which may ſtand you inſtead as long as you live; it may be they may tell you, that when God began firſt to

work

work upon their Soul, he was pleaſed to make uſe of the particular Application, and the ſpiritual converſation of ſuch a Chriſtian Relation; and, when God came in with comfort, and ſpake peace ſuch a one led them to ſuch a promiſe, which was like a Cordial to their fainting Soul. When they were abroad (they will tell you) and were neceſſitated to the company of them which were ſtrangers to the life of Religion; and were at ſuch a time troubled with horrible Temptations; that they were in a wilderneſs-condition, and thought that never any that walked Heaven-ward, could be in the like ſtate; but now when they got acquainted with the people of God, they found, that as Face anſwered Face in a Glaſs, ſo their experience, and the experience of many of the dear Children of God was exactly alike; and that, that which they thought none in the world could parallel, they find that moſt of the Chriſtians that they meet with, know as well as themſelves, and at the firſt hearing are able to go on with the ſtory before them, ſo that they have ſometimes wondred how any one living ſhould know their Hearts and Thoughts ſo well, to whom they did not communicate them. I think it not altogether impertinent here to inſert an obſervation of mine own. I remember when *I* was once ſpeaking concerning the duty of Chriſtians in Relation to their Unconverted Friends, and urging them upon doing what they could for God and Souls, in the places where God hath ſet them: in ſpeaking to this ſubject, I ſaid, that there was not the meaneſt Chriſtian, but might be an inſtrument of the Converſion of a Soul: Upon this, *I* rehearſed a couple of Experiences that *I* had

of

of two perſons, ſtrangers one to the other, who gave this account of their Converſion; they were upon the matter both alike, and therefore I ſhall tell but one of them, which take as followes. There was a Poor, Civil, yet very Carnal Creature, a Servant in a Religious Family, who did from his Soul abhor the Spiritual Converſation of thoſe in the Family, inſomuch that he was reſolved to run away from his Service, he was ſo weary of ſuch doings: But one Night, hearing a ſtrange ſound ſomewhere, he aroſe out of his Bed, and went to liſten what was the matter: upon which, he heard one diſtinctly praying on the other ſide of the wall, he ſtill hearkning, heard one praying very earneſtly for him (who did not know but he might be aſleep) and opening the condition of his Soul ſo particularly, and with ſo much Tenderneſs, that he was wonderfully awakened to think that one that he hated ſhould ſo much love him, and pitty his Soul, and to conſider how it was poſſible any one in the world ſhould know his Thoughts ſo well as that perſon did, who prayed for him; upon this he began to be very much ſtartled to think of his condition, concluding thus, ſurely I am in a lamentable ſtate, and they ſee it, or elſe they would never do as they do; they are praying for me, when I am aſleep, they love me when I hate them; upon this the man was very much troubled, and his trouble daily increaſed, till he was forced to open his condition to the perſon, who had been praying for him, which was a poor Maid-ſervant: upon which the work of Regeneration was carryed on very ſweetly, and the man became an excellent Chriſtian, whereas the Inſtrument that God

God used in this great work was but a poor servant. Now when I rehearsed this thing which was the condition of two, as I said before, a third person stood by (whom I never saw in my life before) who fell a sweating for trouble, that any of his Friends should tell such a thing of him, to me, and thought I had meant himself in all the particulars, though I heard not a word of the man before in my life. This by the by, I could not but hint this for the encouragement of parents to get their children into Families that are really Religious, and to encourage all to associate themselves to such as fear the Lord. You see by what hath been spoken, that acquaintance with the people of God, may be of great use for the bringing the Soul acquainted with God.

VII. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God; entertain all the Messengers that he sends to you kindly. When God calls, answer; and when he sends any of his servants to you, bid them welcome; let the feet of those which bring glad tidings be beautiful in your eye; do not think much if they deal plainly and roundly with you, know that it is out of love to your Souls (God is their witness) they see that your condition requires it, & that a man in your state is not to be jested with. The Lord knows that they take little pleasure in grieving of people; they do it that you may rejoyce for ever, they watch for your Souls, and therefore you must account them worthy of double Honour. But of all the Messengers that God sends, have the greatest care of dealing unkindly

kindly with, and grieving his Spirit; when you have any motions upon your Soul by the Spirit, labour to cheriſh them with all the care and tenderneſs that you can: Turn not Convictions away with, I am not at leiſure; or I will hear you of theſe things when I have a more convenient ſeaſon: but as ſoon as you find your heart begin to relent, cry out unto the Lord, and ſay, O Lord, I beſeech thee, carry on thy work effectually upon my Soul. O that I may have through work! O let not theſe convictions wear off from my Soul, till they end in a real Converſion! O let me not prove but a Half-Chriſtian! Any thing in the world, Lord, ſo that I may but be made a Chriſtian in good earneſt! O let me not return with the Dog to his Vomit, and with the Sow that is waſhed, to her Wallowing in the Mire! Deliver me, O God, from ſinning away theſe things, and getting into a cold World, and from ſhaking off all, leſt I prove worſe than ever, and my latter end be more miſerable than my beginning. Labour to be very curious in the taking notice of Gods abſence or preſence; and when you find your Soul raiſed in any duty, and your Heart ſomewhat drawn out after God, then be ſure to own Gods goodneſs, and bleſs the Lord for it; Record his kindneſs, forget not his mercy, paſs not over ſuch great things in ſilence. Little do Men think what a hazard they run, when they quench the Motions of Gods Sprit. You may read in the 5. *Cant.* how dearly the Spouſe had like to have paid for ſuch an unkindneſs? What, ſhall God ſend his ſpirit to viſit you? Shall the infinite Majeſty ſo far condeſcend as to knock at your Door, and will not you open?

Why

why then, you may thank your ſelves if he never knock more. But if you will now open to him, he will come into you, and ſup with you, and you ſhall ſup with him.

VIII. DIRECTION.

Seek his Acquaintance moſt earneſtly if you would have it. O why do men and women jeſt with matters of the greateſt weight and importance in the world? What do people mean to play with their Souls, the wrath of God, and damnation? O ſinners, have you nothing elſe to play with? No lower matters to ſport with? Believe it, Sirs, Heaven and Glory are not got with ſitting ſtill with our Hands in our pockets. We think it worth the while to riſe early, and to ſit up late, to get an earthly Eſtate; we count it no fooliſh thing for a man to be very diligent about his Worldly Affairs. The poor Country-man Plows and Sows, Harrows, Weeds, Reaps, Inns, Threſheth, and a great deal more, before he can eat his bread: and ſhall we look for a rich crop, and do nothing at all but eat, and drink, and ſleep? Is this the way to be rich? is this the way to be happy for ever? If you intend to do any thing in Religion to any purpoſe, you muſt buckle to your buſineſs at another gueſs rate than moſt of the Profeſſors of the World do: We muſt take as much pains about our Souls, as men do about their Bodies or Eſtates. Is there any compariſon between the Soul and the Body, between a Worldly Eſtate, and an Heavenly Inheritance? Hath a man more reaſon to look after tricking up his body that muſt die, or look after the adorning

adorning of his ſoul that muſt live ſomewhere for ever? Which are matters of the greateſt conſequence, eating and drinking, pampering the fleſh, and taking our pleaſure; or looking after Life, Salvation, and Eternal Joy? Do you think that the Scripture ſaith in vain, *That we muſt ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate*? Is it a bare ſeeking that will ſerve the turn? Will a *Lord have mercy upon me*, and bowing the knee, do as well as the greateſt ſerioufneſs and diligence in the World? Do you think that God will be put off with the skin and garbage inſtead of ſacrifice, with the ſhell inſtead of the kernel, with chaff inſtead of the corn? Doth not Chriſt ſay, *That many ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able*? O why do not lazy Profeſſors read the Scriptures with trembling? Let all thoſe that are angry with us for putting them upon making religion their buſineſs, and uſing all diligence *to make their calling and election ſure*, Read that one Scripture over again, *Luk.* 13. 24. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate; for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able*, &c. It was Chriſt who ſpoke that word. If we tell you of the danger of a formal Religion, you will ſoon fall upon us as Enemies to your peace, and thoſe which impoſe too much ſtrictneſs upon you: We therefore do here produce our Commiſſion for what we ſay, or rather we deſire you but to read your ſelves what Chriſt ſpoke, as touching this matter: O it might juſtly make a Chriſtians heart to ake, to think how many thouſands of Profeſſors will be diſowned by Chriſt in that day, who will make many fair pleas for themſelves, and pretend a great deal of acquaintance with him. Conſider I

beſeech you, here is no fear of Exceſs; never any man in the World that was too ſolicitous about his Salvation, never any man took too much pains for Heaven. Awake, O ſleeper, what meaneſt thou? ariſe, and call upon thy God. If you make any thing of the loſs of a Soul, look about you; if you think the wrath to come conſiderable, be ſerious; if you would not be burnt by the fire of his Indignation, you muſt take hold of his ſtrength, and make peace with him, and God will be at peace with you, *Iſa.* 27. 5. It is not without cauſe, that the Prophet doth complain, *Iſa.* 64. 7. *There is none that calls upon thy Name that ſtirs up himſelf to take hold on thee. There is none that calls upon Gods Name!* One would think that that were ſtrange; What none call upon his Name, when ſo many of them made many Prayers, as you have it in the firſt of *Iſaiah*? What did they nothing but look upon one another, when they had their Solemn Aſſemblies? Did they ſay nothing to God, when they came before him? Did they do nothing at all in that 58. of *Iſaiah*, when they are ſaid to ſeek him daily, when they ſeemed to delight in his way? Yet in Gods eſteem, all this goes for nothing at all, this prayer is no prayer, this is only wording of it with God. But prayer it is another kind of thing, it is the ſtirring up of the Soul, and a wakening all it's ſtrength to wreſtle with God, to lay hold upon God, and to prevail with the Almighty; and where are ſuch as theſe to be found, who is this that engages his heart in the ſervice of God? It is one thing to engage the tongue, and another thing to engage the heart. Men come to pray with a common Spirit, and are many times weary of the

the work before they have well begun it; what they do, they do it lifeleſsly: They can follow their wordly Imployments with life and delight. They have Male in their flock, but that's too good for God; a lame, blind, ſtarved weak thing muſt ſerve his turn: And is this the way to have the bleſſing? Are ſuch as theſe like to have any thanks for their kindneſs? Let them try how any of their Friends would take ſuch a preſent. Now would you have the Bleſſing of Acquaintance with God, you muſt wreſtle for it, and not let God go without it: You muſt be *Fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord*; you muſt *fight the good fight of Faith, and lay hold on Eternal Life*: You muſt graſp about Chriſt, as a man that is a drowning would graſp any thing that were thrown out to ſave him: You muſt uſe *all diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure*: You *muſt work out your Salvation with fear and trembling*: You muſt *ſeek for Wiſdom as for Silver, and ſearch for her as for hid Treaſure. Then ſhall you underſtand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledg of God.* What excellent thing is there, that is got without pains? Whoever came to be an Exquiſite curious Artiſt in any skil whatever, that never ſerved an Apprentiſhip to it, nor at the leaſt gave his mind to it? where is there a famous Phyſitian that never ſtudied in his life? Who gets a Victory by ſleeping and careleſſeneſs? Who expects to have riches drop into his mouth when he goes all the ways that can be to make himſelf a beggar? Doth the Husband man look for a good Crop without plowing or ſowing? Why then, ſhould we expect ſuch great things as Heaven, Eternal happineſs, and the favour of God, with-

out looking after them. Whatsoever the lazy formal professor may say, the Kingdom of Heaven is not obtained thus: there must be running, watching, fighting, conquering, holding fast, holding out, and all little enough; it requires all the strength of thy soul to engage in this great work; it requires some resolution to do such a work, as every Christian must do, or else his Religion signifies little. Further, it calls for some time too, it is not a thing to be minded, now and then by the by, between sleep and wake, when the Devil and the World have had as much service as they call for. Were it for your bodies that I were now pleading; were you like to get any great matter in the world by following of my directions; could you be shew'd away how to get a great estate, honours, and long life, I am verily perswaded a few words might prevail much. Why, if you will believe the word of God, I am telling you of other kind of things then these be, greater matters by far; and yet how little are Men and Women affected? As if we spoke but in jest always, when we spoke about things that did concern Souls! How little time do men spend in their inquiry into these things? Ask *Epictetus* (*Ench.* c. 63) And he will tell you that it is a sign of a low Soul; to bestow much time upon thy body, and the thoughts of it, and little upon the Soul; to be long eating, and long drinking, and long a dressing, and short in prayer, short in the thoughts of the Soul, and short in the service of God; and that it is a sign of a base degenerate Spirit to be very curious about toys, and inconsiderable trifles, and to be negligent about matters of the greatest importance, to slubber o-

ver the great works of Religion with the greateſt ſlightneſs. Remember, O man, thy great work, it is to take care of thy Soul, to look after a Companion, a Friend for thy Soul, to get food and cloathing for thy Soul, that that famiſh not with hunger and cold. To be indifferent in all externals is the greateſt prudence; but to be indifferent about Spirituals and Eternals is the greateſt madneſs. We are all Souldiers, and muſt fight in ſuch a War wherein we muſt never lay down our Arms. The favour of God is worth the ſtriving for, it is as much as Heaven and Glory is worth. If your eſtate or life lay at ſtake, would you not be willing to uſe all the intereſt you could to make the Judg your friend? would you go up and down laughing as if you had nothing to do? would you eat and drink as merrily as ever, and ſay, it is but dying, it is but being a beggar, it is but the undoing of my wife and children? would you not look upon a man that ſhould argue at this rate to be little better than frantick? and I pray which is moſt conſiderable, the death of the body, or the death of the ſoul; the loſs of a temporal, or the loſs of an eternal inheritance. Moſt mens diligence in Temporals will condemn their negligence in Spirituals. Chriſt ſaid, *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of Heaven, & the righteouſneſs thereof*; but moſt men ſay, I will ſeek firſt the Earth, and the glory thereof; and if God will give me Heaven and happineſs after I have ſerved the Devil and the world as long as I can, I ſhall be contented to have it. No ſuch matter, never expect it, God muſt ſooner ceaſe to be, than to gratifie you in this. Wherefore do you thing, did *David* fol-

low his work so close? Why did all those Noble Worthies in the Church of old take so much pains? Why should they not much stick to venture estates, and lives too? Will you condemn them all as guilty of too much curiosity, and unnecessary precisenes? Do you think that their labour was in vain? Are all those disappointed who willingly parted with present things for future things? I must tell you, if you expect to sit down with *Abraham*, *Isaac*, & *Jacob* in the Kingdom of Heaven, you must do as they did. Heaven will not be obtained now upon any lower term than then. Your Souls are as precious as their's, and Heaven will be as well worth your minding as theirs, and God will look upon you as well as upon them, if you will value his favour as they did. Never look to have God give you that which you will not thank him for. What do you say after all this? will you sit down before your work is done? open thine eyes, and consider what thou hast to do, and then tell me if it be not the greatest folly imaginable to be slight in these Affairs. O how can'st thou eat, or drink, or sleep, whilst thou hast such a great work to do which is undone! O give not sleep to thine eyes, or slumper to thine eye-lids, but deliver thy self from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler. *Go to the* Ant *thou sluggard: Consider her ways, and be wise; which having no guide, over-seer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the Summer, and gathereth her meat in the Harvest.* How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep, so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.*

And

and will you now labour to get acquaintance with God, as you would to get food for your body? will you endeavour as much to make sure of his love, as you would do to make sure of a pardon, in case of the forfeiture of your life? If so, we have some hopes, the work may have some considerable issue.

IX. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, be much in expostulating the case with God, in urging those arguments which the Scripture doth afford you in such a case. Take with you words, and come unto the Lord, and spread your requests before him, and say, *O Lord, thou hast sent thy servants the Ministers, and hast invited me to come unto thee, & thou offeredst peace and reconciliation, and to be acquainted with me. O God, I desire from my soul, to come upon thy call, and would fain be acquainted with thee. I see my self in an undone state, while I am a stranger to thee: but, O Lord, I have a cursed base heart that keeps me back from thee, and I can't tell what in the world to do. O Lord, I beseech thee help thy poor Creature to come unto thee, lead me by the hand, let thy goodness and love constrain me, conquer me by thy kindness; come Lord into my soul, and let me see thy face, & look upon thee till I am in love with thee. O why art thou as a stranger to me? wilt thou forsake me for ever? shall I be one of those thine enemies which shall be slain before thy face? shall I be one of those that shall dwell with everlasting burnings? O Lord, pity, pity, pity, for Christ his sake, a poor creature that would fain love thee, & be acquainted with thee. I am convinced that I must be damned without thee, & come to thee*

of my self I cannot. O draw me! O carry me! O compel me! constrain me, make me willing in the day of thy power: I cannot get loose, my heart is too hard for me, my lusts are too strong for me, my temptations are too many for me to conquer of my self. O Lord help me. Turn me, and I shall be turned. Pluck my feet out of the snare, or I shall be utterly destroyed for ever. Forgive mine iniquity, make me a clean heart, make me thy servant. Tell God that thou hast heard of his goodness and mercy, and that the King of *Israel* is a merciful King; and that it is his nature to pity. Say to him, O I am a poor undone creature, and wilt thou send me away without mercy? will the God of Grace send me away without Grace? hast thou not called me, O God? thy servants tell me so, O Lord speak and give me ears to hear; O Lord I am come in upon thy merciful Proclamation, and I desire to lay my self at thy feet; mercy Lord, mercy upon what terms thou pleasest. Didst thou not say in thy Word, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come, and buy Wine and Milk without Money, and without price.* Have not thy servants pleaded with me to come? and hast thou not sent for me? O! a blessing, a blessing for me, even for me, O my father! Hast thou not a blessing for me? shall I be sent away as I came? O Lord, I come at thy word! Do not say unto me, Be gone out of my sight. I cannot go, I will not go; whither shall I go from thee? For thou hast the words of Eternal Life. Though I cannot say, Be just to me a Saint, yet I will say, Be merciful to me a sinner. You may read more in *R. A.* his first part of his *Vindiciæ Pietatis*, pag. 232, the whole Treatise is excellent. Plead the blood of Christ; you may safely

say,

ſay, (that if there be not enough in Chriſt to ſave you, you do not deſire Salvation: for in him there is all fulneſs. You may plead you own abſolute neceſſity. Tell God, that if ever poor creature in the world had need of mercy, you have; tell him that you are reſolved not to be content without his love. You may plead his promiſe, in which he hath ſaid, *That he will take away the heart of ſtone, and give a heart of fleſh; & that he will put his fear in our hearts, & write his laws in our inward parts.* You may plead alſo the power of God, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things unto himſelf; and many ſuch like arguments, you may find in many places in the Scripture. But becauſe I have touched upon this before, I ſhall paſs this by.

X. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, look after it ſpeedily, defer not a moment, your enemy is marching on apace, you may be ſurprized, your ſoul is haſting upon it's Eternal ſtate, your glaſs is almoſt run, there are but a few ſands behind; therefore ſeek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near: Ere long it will be too late; wherefore what thou doſt, do quickly. What is the voyce both of Scripture and Providence? Doth not the Word of God ſay *Now*, and commend the preſent time above all. Acquaint *now* thy ſelf with him; Remember *now* thy Creatour; Turn *now* unto the Lord. Let a poor Heathen (*Epiſt. En.* c. 75.) ſhame you into greater ſpeed in this neceſſary work. I ſhall tranſlate his words into *Engliſh*: *How long*, ſaith he, *will you defer the looking after the*

beſt

beſt things? How long will you abuſe your reaſon? Have you not heard ſuch Precepts which you ought to agree to, and you ſeemed very well to like of? What kind of Teacher is it that you ſtay for? For whoſe coming do you defer before you will mend and turn? You are come now to years of diſcretion (if I ſhould ſay you were not, you would be angry) if you will neglect and delay, and add one delay to another, if you will add one put off to another, and make one reſolution and purpoſe after another, and ſet one day after another, in which you will think of theſe things; conſider that all this will do you no good, for all your reſolutions and promiſes, for all that I ſee, you are like to die a common man; therefore *now* live as a perfect growing man, and follow that which is moſt excellent unalterably. If any thing of difficulty intervene, remember that *now* is the time for you to ſhew what reſpect you have for your God and your ſoul. Remember the goal is not far off, and that *now* you muſt not falter, and that as you demean your ſelf *now*, it may be you may be happy or miſerable while you have a Being. This is the Language of that excellent Moraliſt. I add, what is it, O ſinner, that thou ſtayeſt for? Is it for the day of Judgment? would you be taught by flames, the worth of time? You may then indeed learn; but believe it, your knowledge and learning will do you little good; you may then learn what it is to be miſerable, but you can't learn how to get out of it, you will know what you have loſt, but then will never know how to repair your Loſſes. How many Thouſands of them which have ſet a day, in which they would return and repent, have ſet

and

and set, and set it again, and what with one thing or other they could not be at leasure to repent till they came to Hell; and there indeed they have leisure enough to repent, and they do repent too, if Hell-Repentance would do any thing: I believe that all that come there do repent and believe too more than they did while they were alive; but then it's too late. They that are now in those dreadful Flames, many of them thought it may be, of repenting before they died as well as you, and did just as you do. O that you would understand your selves before your state be like theirs! how infinitely doth it concern you to improve time, and to comply with the present tender of mercy that are made to you: for ere long it may be too late for you too. O know this therefore, that *now* thy God makes thee a gracious offer of pardon; and if you refuse *now*, this may be the last time, this may be the very cast for Eternity. God may say before to morrow, *This night thy soul shall be required of thee*, Go to therefore, you that talk of trading for the great things of Eternity, I do not know when, thirty or forty years hence, Do you not know that your life is but a blast? When your breath goes out of your Nostrils, you are not sure that you shall draw it in again. What then do you mean to talk of delay? have you not staid long enough already? consider man what thou dost. He that saith he will be good to morrow, he saith he will be wicked to day. And what if God should say, thou shalt have the pleasure of sin to day, and he sorrow of sin to morrow? Thou shalt be hardned to day, and damned to morrow? If your house were on fire, you would scarce say, I will go and

sleep

sleep four or five hours, and then I will rise and call my Neighbours to help to quench it. If your Child were a drowning, you would scarce say, I must needs stay till *I* have drunk a flaggon or two more, and about half an hour hence it may be *I* may go and see whether I can get a Boat to help him out. *If* you were condemned to dye to morrow, you would scarce say, I will have Musick, and Sack, and good company all night, and then *I* will send a Messenger if *I* can get one to ride a Hundred Mile to try whether he can get a Pardon for me. Yet thus for all the world thou dost do in the great affairs of thy immortal Soul. *O the folly of man* (saith *Seneca*) *who thinks to begin to live, when a thousand to one but he will be dead and rotten!* *I* may say, O the madness of sinners, who make account to be looking after Heaven then, when it's likely their souls may be in Hell! Judge now whether this be wisdom. Now you think time one of the poorest commodities in the world, it's a very drugg which lies upon your hand, a day or two, a week, a year is no great matter with you: but believe it, the case will be altered with a witness ere long. *Seneca* wondred when he heard some asking one of his friends for to spend two or three weeks with them, when he saw how easily the request was granted, as if they asked as little as nothing, when they ask'd time of him: *Thus* (saith he) *one of the preciousest things in the world is thrown away as little worth.* When you come to lie upon your death bed, we shall have you have other thoughts of time: then, a world, if you had it, for one of those hours, that you could not tell how to spend. You now study how to rob your self of your precious time, you invent

pastimes,

pastimes, not considering how swiftly time flies, and how much you will prize it before long. O remember no body can give you a moment of that time when you want it, that you are now so prodigal of. When time is past, if you would give a world to recal it, it could not be: If you would give thousands for the renewing of this Lease, it would be refused. Therefore live quickly. Mans time runs away first. *Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi, prima fugit--. Seneca.* And then my Author Comments very bravely upon the whole verse.

I think that Proverb, though it be an *Italian* one, is worth our remembring, *He that will lodge well at night, must set out betimes in the morning.* That which keeps us from living to day, is the thoughts of living to morrow, so that we lose this day while we expect the next. *Commenius* speaking of ithe *Tyger*, saith, *That when he hears the sound of the Trumpet, he tears & bites himself.* This will be the work of the merciless Tygers of the world, that spend their time (in which they should be providing for Eternity) in hunting Gods people, and taking their pleasures; and it may be think to be a little more mild before they die; but of a sudden the Trumpet sounds, Away, away, and O then what a lamentable taking are they in! how do they wish for time again, or that they had spent that which they had better? Wicked men never knew the worth of time, till they come to a Death bed, or a while after. O then, they that made nothing of spending thirty to fourty years, would lay down all they are worth for one year, one month, one day, one hour, but it's then too late. O how do they gnash their teeth!

teeth! with what horrour do they think of paſt mercies, and future miſeries! Men fear generally that Death will come ſooner than they would have him; they bewail that their lives are ſhort at the longeſt; whereas if men would wiſely huſband that time that God hath given them, it would be long enough: O happy is that man that hath done his great Work before his Sun is ſet? O fooliſh men that complain of God for making their lives ſo ſhort, and complain not at all of themſelves for making them ten times ſhorter: For moſt men lives not at all the life of Religion, and may be called Dead. Others have a name to live, and yet are little better than the former. Moſt that live ſpiritually, begin their life after they have been many years dead: & though we ſit and condemn others as guilty of great imprudence in theſe affairs, yet, how do we at the ſame time juſtifie them, by being as profuſely expenſive of precious time as they? O where's the man almoſt to be found, that doth improve time to as good advantage as he ſhould? Among other Symptomes of a fool, this is none of the leaſt, *To be always beginning to live*. What an unhandſome ſight is it to ſee an old man learning his Letters? O remember man thou haſt a great work to do! O remember thy precious time runs away with any an unſpeakable ſwiftneſs! What do you mean, to ſit with your hands in your boſoms? Look about thee, O ſinner, 'tis not time a day for you to be ſleeping or playing; Methinks a man in your condition ſhould be up and doing with all the diligence that you could for your ſoul, & labouring *to make your calling and election ſure*, methinks we ſhould hear you asking, what you

ſhall

ſhall do to get a Pardon for your ſins, to get God reconciled to you. Methinks you ſhould be enquiring what you ſhould do to redeem your time, & to ſpend every moment of it ſo to the beſt advantage, as that you may appear chearfully before your Maſter at night. That I may inforce this weighty Direction, I ſhall propound a few ſerious Queſtions to you.

Queſt. 1. Do you think that theſe things are neceſſary, or are they not? If they be neceſſary, why do you not mind them ſpeedily? If they be not neceſſary, do not look after them at all.

Queſt. 2. Do you expect to be in a better capacity to look after theſe things hereafter? do you hope for more ſtrength, when you are worn out with ſin and age, when your back begins to bend, and your joynts to ſhake? Do you think you ſhall be more at leiſure, when your work will be much increaſed? Know this, that ſin grows upon you daily, it preys upon your Vitals: He that is not fit to day, will be leſs fit to morrow. As for leiſure, I muſt confeſs you may have leiſure enough in another World, to think of theſe things. But I wiſh you well to conſider whether it be great wiſdom to repent in this world, or in another. I would be loath to be repenting in another, it's ſad weeping indeed there, where tears ſhall never be dried up. I have told you oft that God ſaith, to day, and it is both wickedly and fooliſhly done of man to ſay, to morrow. I muſt tell you but ſo, that it is a dreadful hazard that every delaying Sinner doth run: It is a queſtion whether God may not deny his Grace, ſtop the Preachers mouth, ſtop his ears, and ſtop your breath: And where are you then with your to morrow?

morrow? delays in these affairs always cost dear; they have cost many thousands dear already, and if you make no more hast than you have done, they will cost you dear too.

Quest. 3. When would you get acquainted with God? When he hath shut up his door? When would you run this race? When you have lost your legs, or can but creep with Crutches? Is that the best time to do your work in, when it is next to impossible to do it?

Quest. 4. Who deserves best at your hands, the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, or God? Resolve me this I pray? Whom do you call your Master? Whom have you most reason to make hast for?

Quest. 5. How would you take it, if any of them which depend upon you, should serve you as you serve God?

Quest. 6. Do you think you can make too much hast? Who is afraid of being Rich too soon? Although a man may with reason good enough be afraid of that which may make his happiness far more uncertain, and his miseries more intollerable. Who fears to make too much hast when his Prince sends for him with speed? O that men did but know, who it is that calls them, and whether they are going, and what they have to do, when they come to their journies end!

Quest. 7. Are you sure you shall live till you are an hour older? You are strong and healthful it may be, but did you never hear that such have dyed with a very little warning? Have you never known a man well one hour, and dead the next? If you have not, I tell you of one now, that was very

very well one moment, and dead the next, my self being an eye-witness of it. It's possible there may be but one small moment between a strong working healthful man, and breathless Corps.

Quest. 5. What do you think will become of you, I ask again, if you put off till it be too late?

Quest. 9. What would you do, if you were sure you should die, or the day of Judgment come before you were a week older?

Quest. 10. Do you think to get acquainted with *God* in another world, when you do not mind him here? Will God think you own them hereafter, that disown him here? Will he know them in Heaven, who would not know him upon the Earth?

XI. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with *God*, take heed of those things, which keep God and man at a distance, and make the Lord take no pleasure in us. In general, take heed of all sin, *Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do good, seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the Fatherless, and plead the cause of the Widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord*, Isa. 1. 17, 18. You must wash your hands in Innocency, if you intend to compass his Altar, to sit down at his Table. In *Psal.* 101. *David* is exceeding desirous of Gods company, and he cries out, *O when wilt thou come unto me!* he thinks long to have a visit from his old friend; he would gladly walk with him. Now what course doth he take to get *God*,

company? Why, he goes the best way to work in the world: He will set no wicked thing before his eyes. He knows it is to no purpose for him to expect much of Gods company, while he doth entertain his greatest enemies; therefore he turns them out of doors; I hate, saith he, the works of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me. And that God may dwell with him, and make his house, as well as his heart, a Temple for himself, he will not suffer a wicked person to live in it, he will have none in his Family, but such as shall be ready to serve God, and bid this his great Friend welcome.

But more particularly, if you would have much of Gods company, and be intimately acquainted with him; take heed more especially of those particular sins which make God most to estrange himself from us: As,

First, Take heed of Pride: That was the sin which made the first breach between the Creature and the Creator, the sin that sunk the Angels, that made God and them, who were very good Friends once, to be bitter enemies; this hath made the breach infinite, the feud everlasting, the wound incurable, And this made the first Quarrel between God and man. When man thinks himself too good to be but a man, he must be a God; he quickly is too bad to be a man, he is but one remove from the Devil. To be a favourite of his Prince is not enough, except he may step into the Throne; it's therefore high time for his Prince to remove such from his presence to a Prison, from the Court to a Dungeon. It was Pride that cast *Adam* out of Paradise; and do you think that that sin is less hateful to

God

God, and leſs dangerous to man than it was five thouſand years ago? Did it then ſpend all it's poyſon? And can it now do no harm? Do you believe that God will take that into his boſome now that formerly he abhorred to look upon? Now ſin hath increaſed it's ſtrength and deformity, and heightened it's enmity againſt the infinite Majeſty of the holy *Jehovah*; ſhall his hatred againſt it decreaſe? will he be more willing to accompany proud aſpiring Rebels now than then? no ſuch matter: God is ſtill as holy as ever, and hates all ſin, eſpecially pride as much as ever. Do you think that it is for nothing that the word of God ſpeaks ſo much againſt this ſin? Can it be that the Holy-ghoſt would ſay, *Prov.* 11. *That every one that is proud, is an abomination to the Lord*, except God did indeed hate them? Why ſhould God threaten ſuch ſo much, if he took any pleaſure in their Society? *though hand joyn in hand, yet the proud ſhall not go unpuniſhed. Now we call the proud happy, but ſhall we call him ſo, when the day of the Lord ſhall burn as fire, and all the proud ſhall be as ſtubble: And the day that cometh ſhall burn them up, ſaith the Lord, and it ſhall leave them neither root nor branch. When the Lord ſhall tread down the wicked, and they ſhall be like Aſhes under his feet, Mal.* 3. 15. & 4. 1, 3. There is not one proud man in Heaven, I am ſure; Nor a proud man upon the Earth, that ſhall have much of Gods acquaintance. And let me ſay, he that ſets himſelf above God (for that's the Pride I mean) whileſt he ſtands in that ſtate, muſt never expect that God ſhould look upon him with any kindneſs. Heaven and Hell will as ſoon be agreed, as God and ſuch a one ſhall be united. The

proud now overlook others that are their betters, and ſcorn their Maker; but ſhortly they ſhall be paid in their own coyn, they ſhall be ſcorned too. If all the proud *Nimrods*, *Pharaohs* and *Belſhazzars* in the world ſhould enter into a League, and combine againſt the Almighty, and ſay, they will caſt away his cords from them, and that they will never debaſe their noble Spirit ſo low as to ſtoop to his commands; yet none of them all ſhall go unpuniſhed: They ſhall be like ſtubble before the devouring flames, and like Chaffe before a mighty whirlwind: God is not afraid of their big looks, *Prov.* 21. 4. *Prov.* 6. 17. *Prov.* 15. 25. *Iſa.* 2. 12. *Luke* 1. 51. *Jam.* 4. 6. God will cloath himſelf with vengeance, and the mighty *Jehovah* will gird his weapon upon his thigh, and march out in fury and Indignation, and draw his glittering Sword, and reſiſt the proud, and teach them what it is to bid defiance to the Lord of Hoſt. We ſhall ſoon ſee, who ſhall be uppermoſt, God or they. And when the proud ſinner lies conquered at his feet, how doth he with infinite ſcorn look upon him, and ſay, behold, the man is become like one of us! This 'tis for man to attempt the dethroning of the Almighty! But it may be, moſt may think themſelves little concerned in that which I now ſpeak; wherefore I muſt add this one word. Be it known unto thee, O man, whoſoever thou art, that think'ſt thou haſt no pride; I am ſure thou art one of thoſe that are in that black Roll which have proclaimed War againſt Heaven; thou art the man that ſhall never be acquainted with God whilſt thou art in that mind. It may be thou may'ſt ſpeak Peace to thy ſelf for all this, and

flatter

flatter thy ſelf as if God and you were Friends; but let me tell thee, I come with heavy tydings in my mouth to thee: If thou turn not, he will whet his Sword, he hath bent his Bow, and made it ready, he hath prepared for thee the Inſtruments of Death, the day of the Calamity is near: The dreadful *Jehovah* is upon his march; and if you ask me whether there be not Peace for thee, I anſwer as *Jehu* did to *Jehoram*, what peace, O haughty ſinner, ſo long as the pride of thy heart is ſo great, and thy Rebellions againſt thy Maker ſo many? There is no Peace ſaith my God to the Wicked. Wherefore as you value your *Soul*, as you tender your everlaſting *Salvation*, and deſire to be owned by the Lord in the day of your diſtreſs, take heed of pride. Go quickly, and humble your ſelf, and make ſure your friend; labour to pull down every high Thought, and every proud Imagination; and let your Arrogant *Spirit* bow before the mighty God, there is no vvay vvill do but this; as you have already heard: You muſt ſet the Crovvn upon the Lord's head, you muſt lay your ſelves at his feet, and lick the very duſt. Your betters have done ſo before you, and have thought it their Honor to lie at the feet of Chriſt; this they look'd upon (as vvith good reaſon too) as the firſt ſtep to preferment. If therefore you vvould be acquainted vvith God, take heed of pride.

Secondly, Take heed of a vvorldly mind. What concord is there between Earth and Heaven What agreement betvveen God and the World? What Delight can his Holineſs take in him, vvho had rather be vvallovving in the Mud, and treading of Clay, than bathing himſelf in

Divine contemplation: that thinks it higher preferment to ſit by his bags of Gold, than to ſtand in the preſence of his God: a greater happineſs to be rich, than to be holy; that had much rather be in a Fair Market, or Exchange, getting money, than with his God, getting Pardon, Grace and Heaven. How pregnant is the Scripture of proofs for the evidencing of this truth? to name one or two of a hundred, *Rom.* 8. 7. *To be carnally minded is enmity againſt God: For it is not ſubject to the Law of God, neither indeed can it be.* What do you ſay to this Scripture? Thoſe which walk with God, live in the world, and yet they live above the world; they all look for a City that hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God. It was not for nothing that the Apoſtle *John* layes ſo ſtrict a charge upon thoſe which he wrote to, *That they ſhould not love the world, nor the things of the world: For if any love the world, the love of the Father is not in them,* 1 *John* 2. 15. Whence is it that ſo few great ones go to Heaven, and that it is next to impoſſible for ſuch to be ſaved? Is it not becauſe they have choſen *Mammon* for their Friend, rather than God? He hath their heart, their Love, their Time, their Service, and they have little to ſpare for God, & therefore God hath but a little happineſs, a little heaven, a ſhort glory for them; they ſhall have but a little of his ſweet company, little Acquaintance with him. Why doth *James* ſpeak ſo terribly to the rich men, & bid them go, and weep and howl? was it not becauſe their riches were like to undoe them? Did the wealthy man in the Parable live ever the longer for his riches, or fare ever the better for his greatneſs, when he came into another world? There is no

queſtion

question but he might have more flatterers; there is no doubt but he hath more worldly Friends; but bring me a man upon the Earth, that lets his heart without controle fly upon the world, cleaves to it, and takes it to be his best friend, that knows God, that's acquainted with his Maker, that prizeth his Redeemer. It was a wise man, who said, that it's absolutely impossible to mind externals and internals, this world and another, with earnestness at the same time: but it was wisdom it self who said, *That no Servant can serve two Masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other; ye cannot serve God and Mammon, Mat.* 5. 24. &c.

3. Take heed of Hypocrisie. Who are the persons that God doth denounce his dreadful threatnings against? Are they not such as honour him with their Lips, when their Hearts are far from him? With what Abhorrency doth he look upon such, and all that they do? *Isa.* 1. They never bring their heart to visit God with, and therefore they have little reason to expect that he should bring his dainties to entertain them with.

4. If you would be acquainted with God, take heed of being acquainted with wicked company. We read that many wicked men have fared the better for the company of the godly; but we scarce ever heard that any godly man ever fared the better for being in the company of the wicked, except they went on Gods Errand amongst them. This is cleat in the case of *Lot*, who first lost his goods, and was made a Captive by being in *Sodom*; and though they were restored to him

again for a while, (one would have thought that ſhould have been a fair warning how he came again into ſuch company) yet becauſe that would not do, awhile after you may read how dear *Lot* paid for dwelling in *Sodom*. Poor man! he loſt all that he had, and was fain to fly away without either Flocks or Herds, and little more than his cloathes on his back; and that which was more ſad, to leave ſome of his own dear Relations behind him, roaſting in thoſe diſmal flames. Whereas had he never come to *Sodom*, or upon the ſight of their wickedneſs ſpeedily left them, it had been much better with him in many reſpects. *Jehoſaphat* fared never the better for joyning in affinity with his wicked Neighbours, it had like to have coſt him his life. But were it, only loſs of Temporals that a man hazarded by ſuch ſociety, the danger were not ſo conſiderable; but the peril is greater than ſo, for by it they make God ſtand at a diſtance; they muſt never look to have ſuch company, and *Gods* company both together; I mean, when they do unneceſſarily or delightfully converſe with God. If therefore you intend to be acquainted with God, you muſt not have them always in your company whom he hates, and which hate him, and will labour all they can to cool your affections towards him. Wherefore, be ye not unequally yoaked with unbelievers: For, what Fellowſhip hath Righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? And what communion hath light with darkneſs? And what concord hath Chriſt with *Belial?* Or what part hath he that believeth with an *Infidel?* And what agreement hath the Temple of God with *Idols?* For ye are the Temple of the living God, as God hath ſaid,

I

I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my People; wherefore come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be my Sons and Daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty, 2 Cor. 6. 14. to the end. But I would not here be miſtaken, as if I would commend an ungodly proud ſeparation from all that are not juſt of our mind; or as if a man ought to have nothing at all to do with wicked men; no, no: Every one ought to do what he can in his place for the good of Souls. O that Chriſtians would thus converſe more with their poor, ignorant, carnal, Chriſtleſs Neighbours! O that they would thus be more acquainted with the wicked, and then they ſhould have never the leſs of Gods company, but the more; but it is an unneceſſary delightful aſſociating of our ſelves with them that I mean, eſpecially ſuch of them which will ſtifle every ſpiritual diſcourſe, and divert you from any thing that tends to the promoting of the intereſt of Religion; and ſuch as have frequently expreſſed their deteſtation of the way of Holineſs, and make but a mock at your ſerious Counſels, ſtop their ears to wholſome Advice, or make ſome undecent reflections upon the ſtrict profeſſion of Godlineſs; ſuch as labour to make you believe that all Religion, but that which will conſiſt with their wickedneſs, is but a Fancy. As for ſuch as thoſe, abhor their company, flye from them as thoſe that have the Plague, the marks of Death are upon them, and you may write *Lord have mercy upon us* upon their Doors, but go not in, leſt you be Infected.

5. If

5. If you would be acquainted with God, take heed of unbelief. Unbelief will make your soul depart from God, and God quite to depart from your soul. This, This is one of those dreadful and God-estranging sins, which leads on whole Legions against the Almighty; This is that bold daring sin which gives Truth it self the lye, and saith, That the Word of God is false, his Promises airy, his Treatnings but a Wind: But know this, O sinner, such a wind they be, that will rise to a dreadful storm, and turn your strong confidence up by the roots, and blow them into Hell, if you make no more of them than you do.

6. If you would be acquainted with God, beware of sensuality To be sensual and deviliſh are near akin. To be lovers of pleasures and haters of God, are usually concomitants; in a word, to fare deliciously every day, and to be despised of God, are no strange things But I wave the further prosecution of these things, because they are so largely and excellently handled already by so many of our brave Worthies, See Mr. *Baxters Saints Rest*, and *R. A* his *Vindiciæ Pietatis*.

XII. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, resolvedly and freely give up your self to him, and enter into a most solemn Covenant with him. And here I shall make bold with that Reverend Author which *R. A.* doth mention in his *Vindiciæ Pietatis*, and present you again with that excellent Form with the preparatories to it, which I have lately met with in the forementioned Author. After your

your moſt ſerious addreſſes to God, and after a deliberate conſideration of the terms of this Covenant; and after a thorow-ſearch of your own heart, whether you either have already, or can now freely make ſuch a cloſure with God in Chriſt, as you have been exhorted to: And when you have compoſed your ſpirits into the moſt ſerious frame poſſible, ſuitable to a tranſaction of ſo high a nature, Lay hold upon the Covenant, and rely upon his promiſe of giving grace and ſtrength, whereby you may be enabled to perform your promiſe. Reſolve in the next place to be faithful, having engaged your hearts, and opened your mouths, and ſubſcribed with your hands to the Lord; reſolve in his ſtrength never to go back. And being thus prepared, and ſome convenient time being ſet apart for the purpoſe, ſet upon the work, & in the moſt ſolemn manner poſſible, as if the Lord were viſibly preſent before your eyes; fall down on your knees, and ſpreading forth your hands towards Heaven, open your hearts to the Lord in theſe or the like words.

O moſt dreadful God for the Paſſion of thy Son, I beſeech thee accept of thy poor Prodigal, now proſtrating himſelf at thy door; I have fallen from thee by mine Iniquity, and am by Nature a Son of Death, and a thouſand-fold more the Child of Hell by my Wicked Practiſe; but of thine infinite Grace thou haſt promiſed Mercy to me in Chriſt, if I will but turn to thee with all my Heart: Therefore upon the Call of the

Goſpel

Gospel I am now come in, and throwing down my Weapons, submit my self to thy mercy. And because thou requirest as the Condition of my Peace with thee, that I should put away mine Idols; and be at defiance with all thine Enemies, which I acknowledge I have wickedly sided with against thee; I here from the bottom of mine Heart renounce them all, freely covenanting with thee, not to allow my self in any known Sin, but conscientiously to use all the means that I know thou hast prescribed for the Death and utter Destruction of all my Corruptions; And whereas I have formerly inordinately and Idolatrously let out my Affections upon the World, I do here resign my heart to thee that madest it, Humbly protesting before thy glorious Majesty, that it is the firm Resolution of my Heart: and that I do unfeignedly desire grace from thee, that when thou shalt call me hereunto, I may practice this my Resolution, through thy Assistance, to forsake all that is dear unto me in this World, rather than to turn from thee to the ways of sin; And that I will watch against all its Temptations, whether of Prosperity or Adversity, lest they should withdraw my Heart from thee; beseeching thee also to help me against the Temptations of Satan, to whose suggestions,

I resolve, by thy Grace never to yield my self a Servant. And because mine own Righteousness is but menstruous Rags, I renounce all Confidence therein, and acknowledge that I am of my self a hopeless, helpless undone Creature, without righteousness or strength. And for as much as thou hast of thy bottomless Mercy offered most graciously to me wretched sinner, to be again my God through Christ, if I would accept of thee; I call heaven and Earth to record this day that I do here solemnly avouch thee for the Lord my God, and with all possible Veneration, bowing the Neck of my Soul under the Feet of thy most Sacred Majesty, I do here take thee the Lord Jehovah, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for my Portion, and chief good, and do give up my self, Body, and Soul for thy Servant, promising and vowing to serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the dayes of my life.*

And since thou hast appointed the Lord Jesus Christ, the only means of coming unto thee, I do here upon the bended Knees of my Soul, accept of him as the only new and living way, by which sinners may have access to thee; and do here solemnly joyn my self in a Marriage-Covenant to him.

O blessed Jesus, I come to thee hungry and

hardly

hardly beſtead, poor, and wretched, and miſerable, and blind, and naked, a moſt loathſome polluted wretch, a guilty condemned Maleſactor, unworthy for ever to waſh the feet of the Servants of my Lord, much more to be ſolemnly Married to the King of Glory; But ſince ſuch is thine unparalleſ'd Love, I do here with all my power accept thee for my Head and Husband, for better for worſe, for richer for poorer, for all times and conditions, to Love and Honour, and Obey thee before all others, and this to the Death. I embrace thee in all thy Offices, I renounce mine own worthineſs, and do here avow thee to be the Lord my righteouſneſs; I renounce mine own wiſdom, and do here take thee for mine only Guide; I renounce mine own will, and take thy will for my Law.

And ſince thou haſt told me that I muſt ſuffer if I will reign, I do here covenant with thee, to take my Lot as it falls with thee, and by thy Grace aſſiſting, to run all hazards with thee, verily ſuppoſing, that neither life nor death ſhall part between thee and me.

And becauſe thou haſt been pleaſed to give me thy Holy Law, as the rule of my life, and the way in which I ſhould walk to thy Kingdom; I do here willingly put my Neck under thy Yoke, and ſet my ſhoulders to thy Burden,

and

and subscribing to all thy Laws, as Holy, Just, and Good; I solemnly take them as the rule of my Words, Thoughts, and Actions: Promising, that though my flesh contradict and rebel, yet I will endeavour to order and govern my whole life according to thy direction, and will not allow my self in the neglect of any thing that I know to be my duty.

Only because through the frailty of my flesh, I am subject to many failings; I am bold humbly to protest, that unhallowed miscarriages contrary to the setled bent and resolution of my heart, shall not make void this Covenant; for so thou hast said.

Now Almighty God, Searcher of hearts, thou knowest that I make this Covenant with thee this day, without any known guile, or reservation, beseeching thee, that if thou espiest any flaw or falshood herein, thou wouldest discover it to me, and help me to do it aright.

And now glory be to thee, O God the Father, whom I shall be bold from this day forward to look upon thee as my God and Father, That ever thou shouldest find out such a way for the recovery of undone sinners. Glory be to thee, O God the Son, who hast loved me, and washed me from my sins in thine own Blood, and art now become my Sal-

Saviour and Redeemer, Glory be to thee, O God the Holy Ghoſt, who by the finger of thine Almighty power haſt turned about my Heart from ſin to God.

O dreadful Jehovah, *the Lord God Omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy, Ghoſt, thou art now become my Covenant-Friend, and I through thine infinite Grace, am become thy Covenant-Servant.* Amen. So be it. *And the Covenant which I have made on Earth, let it be ratified in Heaven.*

The Concluſion.

AND now my Work is done, I muſt leave you; and whether I ſhall ever ſpeak to you, or ſee you, or write to you again while the world ſtands, I know not: My body is frail, and I am a poor dying man, and before it be long, my mouth will be more ſtopped than it is, and yours too: And therefore it's high time for us to look about us. As for my part, I have with all the ſeriouſneſs that I could for my ſoul, ſpoke to you, about the great and weighty affairs of your Souls and Eternity. I again call Heaven and Earth to witneſs, that I have ſet Life and Death before you; I have in the Name of my great Maſter been wooing of you to accept of his Son for your Lord and Husband; himſelf for your God, Father and Friend. I have told you what the Lord doth require of them that would be in Covenant with him. I have given you a rude Deſcription of him whom I would have you acquainted with

with, I have told you of ſome of the glorious effects of acquaintance with God. I have told you of the danger of being a ſtranger to God. I have told you how thankfully ſome have cloſed with theſe offers, and how well they like their choice. I have further ſhow'd you what a peaceable ſtate you ſhall be in, immediately upon your Spiritual Alliance with this Great and Noble friend. I have told you alſo of ſome further benefit and good that will come unto you upon your acquaintance with God. I have given you to underſtand how deſirous the Lord is notwithſtanding all that is paſt, to forget and forgive, and to receive you into favour, if you will in good earneſt return to him with ſpeed. I have again and again propounded this match to you, and told you as much as I could well do in ſo ſhort a time; I have ſtayed a great while for an anſwer, I have put the buſineſs forward all that poſſibly I could; becauſe I ſee how fooliſhly and madly you make light of thoſe advantageous offers, that are made to you; I have again and again pleaded with you, as if I were ready to ſtarve, and begging an alms of you; nay, if it had been for my very life, I could not have ſpoke with more earneſtneſs. I have expoſtulated the Caſe with you, and asked you ſeveral weighty Queſtions, and you have not, you cannot anſwer any one of them, but you muſt condemn your ſelf, and by your own confeſſion, you have nothing in the world to ſay againſt the excellency of this friend. And therefore you muſt either ſpeedily come in, upon the invitation, and cloſe with thoſe gracious overtures that are made to you, or you muſt without any reaſon in the world (your ſelf being

Judge) cast your self away. And in hopes that all that have heard me, will not be so mad as to make light of these things, but be asking with some seriousness, that great question? How shall I do to get acquainted with God? How shall I do to get a Friend for my Soul? What shall I do to be saved? I have laid down some Directions for those that are unfeignedly desirous to be reconciled to God; I have told them that they must labour to be thorowly acquainted with that strangeness, and enmity that is in their hearts against God; and of the unspeakable danger of their being strangers to God. I have further directed them that would be acquainted with God to labour to get humble hearts. I have advised that they visit him often, if they would be intimately acquainted with him; & that not in a transitory way, but to make a Solemn set visit of it, and to be sure that they do not forget to get Christ along with them. I counselled them also to be much in those places where he is wont to walk; and to get intimately acquainted with some of them that know him very well, and will do their best to get them to be acquainted with him. I have told you, that if you would be acquainted with God, you must kindly entertain, and make much of any Messengers that come from him to you; and if men would make sure work, I desired them as they loved their Souls that they would follow this great Business with the greatest earnestness and seriousness in the world; and that what they do, they would do speedily. I informed you what arguments the Scripture puts into our mouths, which we may urge, at the Throne of Grace. I intreated you, for your Souls

ſake to take heed of thoſe things which kept God and man unacquainted; as namely, all ſin in general, but more particularly, Pride, Worldly-mindedneſs, Hypocriſie, delight in wicked company, Unbelief, and Senſuality. Laſtly, I directed all ſuch as would be at peace with God, to give up themſelves to him reſolvedly and freely, in a Solemn Covenant.

And have I been beating the Air all this while? What will you do after all this? What ſhall become of all theſe Sermons? Dare any of you all ſtill be contented to be Unacquainted with God? Can you be very well ſatisfied, after you have heard of ſuch a Friend, to be a ſtranger to him? Can any of you look upon your ſtate as ſafe, while God is your enemy? O how ſhall I leave you, with Hearts full of Enmity againſt your Maker! Alas, alas, poor Hearts! You look very merrily as bad a condition as you are in, but did you but know how neer you are to everlaſting Burnings, I believe it would put a damp upon your Spirits, and ſpoil your Mirth. O how ſhall I leave that poor ſinner, that ſtands as a perſon altogether unconcerned! Whereas death ſtands ready for his Commiſſion, to fetch him away before God; and where are you then? O where are you then, if you come before God as a Stranger? O what ſhall I do for thee? What ſhall I ſay to thee, to prevail with thee! O what arguments will perſwade thee! O, how ſhall we part! Brethren, my hearts deſire is that you may all be ſaved. O that you may all know in this your day, the things of your peace! O that I could mingle all my words with tears! O pitty, pitty, for the Lords ſake, pitty your precious

Souls! O come not here to ask Counsel of God, and then go away, and take the Counsel of the Devil! And what will you yet make light of all the Tenders of the Gospel? Is Peace, Pardon, Reconciliation, and Acquaintance with God, still nothing with you? Will you for all this take up with a lifeless Religion, and never mind a more Spiritual intimate converse with God? As the Lord liveth, thou speakest that word against the life of thy Soul. But if thou wilt go on, and despise God, who can help it? I have told you, and told you again, what the end of these things will be. Well once more, I ask thee in the Name of God, wilt thou have God for thy Friend or no? That is, wilt thou love him above all the World? Wilt thou accept him for thy Lord and Husband? Wilt thou be ruled absolutely by him? Wilt thou lay down thy weapons, and turn on Gods side, and fight under his Banner? Wilt thou have Holiness here, and Happiness hereafter? One would think this is a question, that one need not be long a resolving. Come, come away for the Lords sake; for your precious Souls sake, as you would be owned at the day of Judgment; as you would rejoyce when most of the world shall be filled with unspeakable horror, and perplexity; as you would not hear that heart-rending word from the mouth of the Judge, *Depart, I know you not*, come away, I beseech you! Come away! O ye my dear Friends, the Cloud hangs over the world, and ere long it will fall with a vengeance. O come out of *Sodom*, linger not for the Lords sake, lest the dint of that storm fall upon you. Fire! fire! fire! Awake! awake! awake!

awake! The fire is kindled. What meaneſt thou, O ſinner! if thou ſleepeſt a little longer in that Bed of ſecurity, thou are a dead man, thou wilt be awakened with horror, when thou ſhalt know thy danger, but not know how to avoid it: And do you ſtill ſay? Make haſt? O make haſt, your Glaſs is almoſt out, your time almoſt ſpent, and death is haſtning apace upon you; I ſpeak it again, make haſte, come away, I can't, I can't hold my peace. How can I endure to ſee the ruine of thy Soul, and ſay nothing! O follow thoſe Directions which I have given thee out of the Scripture! Seek the Lord while he may be found, and with all poſſible ſpeed, ſeriouſneſs, and gratitude, accept of his kindneſs, while you may. Methinks ſome of your hearts ſeem to be affected; methinks your countenances ſpeak you to have ſome thoughts of returning; ſome of you look like perſons almoſt reſolved to ſet upon this great work, O that it may not be almoſt, but altogether! Speak in ſuch Language as this to your own Souls. What meaneſt thou, O my Soul, thus to ſtand Diſputing? Is this a time for thee to ſtand ſtill, as if thou hadſt nothing to do? Hark, how the King of Glory calls! Hark how his Meſſengers invite you! Conſider how long they have ſtood waiting for thee! And ſhall they go away without thee? O fooliſh Heart and unwiſe; wilt thou anſwer all theſe Gracious Offers with a flat denial? Or that which is little better, wilt thou put off all Gods Meſſengers with ſome ſorry excuſes? Awake, O my Soul, and look about thee! How can'ſt thou refuſe when Mercy calls? How

canſt thou deny when Kindneſs it ſelf asks, intreats, beſeecheth thee? Awake for ſhame, up and put on thy Wedding Garment! O that this mind might be in you always! O that thou wert up and ready! And then happy were the day wherein thou wert born; then happy were the day that ever you heard of a Chriſt, of Acquaintance with God, and Reconciliation with your Maker. O then how glorious ſhouldeſt thou be for ever! I rejoyce to ſee the day of thy Marriage a coming; when thy Lord and Husband ſhall bring thee home in the greateſt State, and in infinite Glory to his own Houſe, where thou ſhalt ſit like a Queen for ever and ever. Behold his Harbingers are coming! Behold how many Meſſengers the Lord hath ſent to prepare his way! Awake, O *Zion*, and put on thy beautiful Garments! Riſe up, O Royal Bride, and put on thy Princely Robes! Cloath thee with the Sun, and put the Moon under thy feet. Go out and meet the King thy Husband. Behold, O *Jacob*, the Waggons of *Joſeph* are coming! Behold, O daughter of *Zion*, the Chariots, the Chariots of thy King and Husband are a coming! They are a coming! O why doth not thy Heart leap within thee! O why do not thy ſpirits even faint for gladneſs! Why doſt thou not ſay, It is enough, I will go out and meet my Lord before I die? When will the Sun be up! When will the day break! When, O when will the ſhadow fly away! I will get me up to the Mountain of Myrrhe, to the Hills of Frankincenſe. I am travelling for *Zion*, my face is towards *Jeruſalem*; who will aſcend the Holy Hill with me? Who will

will bear me company to my Husband's Houſe? Let us go up to the Lords Houſe; come away, the Sun is riſen, the ſhadows are flying away, thouſands are gone already. Let *Barzillai* and *Chimham*, old and young too, go along with the King of *Jeruſalem*. Come from the Highways and Hedges, come with your Wedding-Garments, come quickly and he will make you welcome. The King hath ſent to invite us to a Feaſt, a Feaſt of fat things, of Wines on the Lees well refined. Come, for the Table is ſpread, all things are ready, and his Servants ſtay for us. And will God entertain ſuch Creatures as we are? And will the Lord open his Doors to ſuch loathſome Beggars? Will the Father receive ſuch Prodigals! Return then unto thy reſt, O my Soul, for the Lord will deal bountifully with thee. Who is that which I ſee coming in the Field? Who is this that comes from the Wilderneſs? That comes to meet us? Hark! methinks I hear the Trumpet ſounding: Hark! what's the matter! How do the Mountains ecchо! How doth the Air ring again! What noiſe is that which I hear! What glorious Train is that which I ſee! Whence do they come, and whither do they go? It is my Maſter's Son (dear Soul) thy Lord and Husband with his Royal Attendants. Behold he comes! He comes apace! Leaping upon the Hills, Skipping upon the Mountains, He is coming! he is coming! he is even at the door! Ere long thou ſhalt ſee the Mountains covered with Chariots and Horſes of Fire; the Earth will tremble and ſhake; the Heavens and the Earth will be all on a Flaming Fire; the King of

Glory

Glory will come, riding upon the Wings of the wind; accompanied with Millions of his Saints and Angels; He is coming, he is at the door. Go, vail thy face; alight and meet thy Husband. He will bring thee into his Fathers Palace, and thou ſhalt be his Wife, and he will love thee for ever: And thou ſhalt remember thy Widdowhood no more. *Even ſo, come Lord Jeſus, come quickly.* Amen, Amen.

FINIS.